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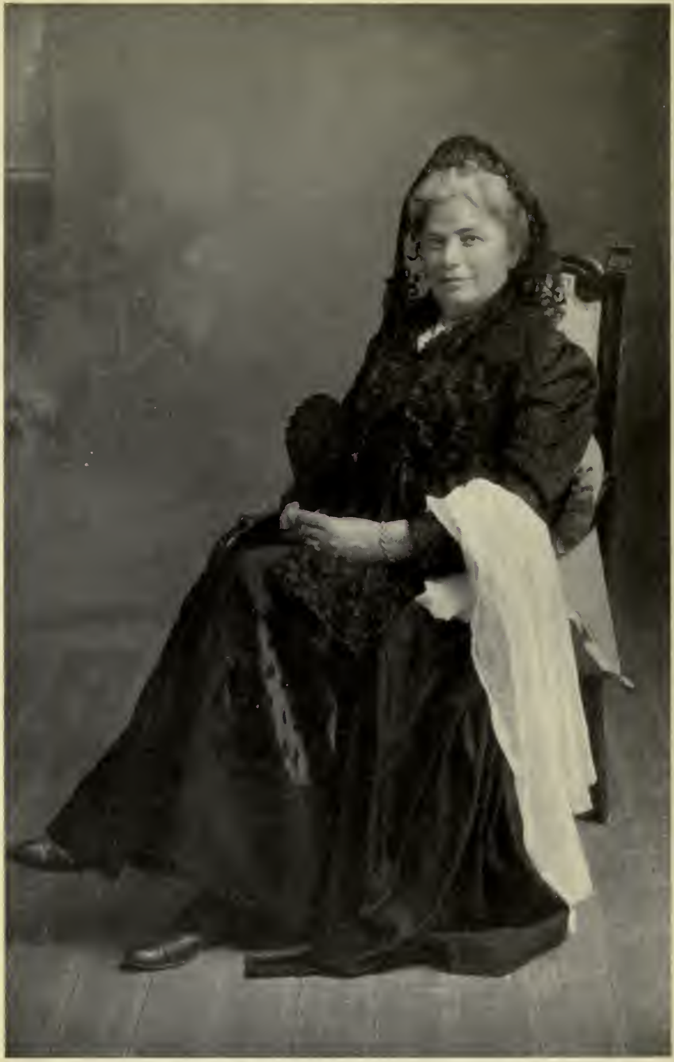

"DOÑA ELENA."

MY SPANISH YEAR

BY

MRS. BERNHARD WHISHAW

AUTHOR (WITH BERNHARD WHISHAW) OF
"ARABIC SPAIN"

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTORY

To the foreigner visiting Spain for the first time so many things seem topsy-turvy that, unless a philosophical spirit be cultivated, one's temper might suffer serious damage. But there is one way not only to endure, but actually to enjoy the minor discomforts, absence of consistency, and utter lack of common sense forced upon one at every turn in this most original country; and that is to regard them all from the standpoint of comic opera. So many people expect to find Spain merely an enlarged edition of Bizet's *Carmen* that it ought not to be difficult for them to smile when comic-operatic incidents are enacted before them in daily life; and yet one often sees the impatient traveller exhausting himself in furious denunciations of tough beef, bad butter, unpunctual trains, faulty postal services, retrograde hotels, and so on *ad infinitum*, instead of thanking his lucky stars that there is still one country in Europe which remains much as God made it, instead of being recast in the mould preferred by the tourist agencies.

No doubt when we get express trains flying from Irun to Madrid and from Granada to Seville at sixty

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miles an hour, with a chain of cosmopolitan hotels all along the road, those tourist agencies will be able to do far better business. But their clients will not then travel in Spain but in Cosmopolitania, and the last stronghold of romance left in Western Europe will have gone the way of Switzerland and Italy, where in some towns it is almost the exception to hear the language of the native spoken in the streets. Thank Heaven, Spain has not yet awakened to the commercial advantages of moulding her national characteristics into the groove of the common-place, and her soul has not yet been cut out and thrown away in the pursuit of filthy lucre.

Meanwhile, the traveller who follows the beaten track has really very little to complain of, for during the last ten years great progress has been made both in the train service and the hotel accommodation; and when you have grumbled and slept and scolded through the eight or ten or twelve or twenty hours' railway journey from one provincial capital to another, and take your place at the table d'hôte in one of the big new hotels, you might almost imagine yourself in London or Paris or New York. One thing, however, reminds you that you are in Spain: the anxious solicitude of the waiters, who watch your every mouthful as if it were a matter of personal consequence to them that you should be pleased with your dinner, and press fresh dishes upon you if you do not eat as much as they think you ought, assuring you that they are very excellent and that you must keep up your strength in order to enjoy the beautiful monuments that you are going to visit to-morrow. This interest of the *mozo* in his master's client is genuine, not inspired by the anticipation of favours to come. He feels it as a reflection upon the credit of the house if you refuse to take every course, and finds it difficult to understand that abstinence may mean satiety, not dissatisfaction with the viands. I doubt if anywhere else one seems of quite so much importance in the eyes of the establishment as in Spain, for these attentions begin with your first meal in the hotel and are continued throughout your stay; and can anything make you more at home in an hotel than a cordial interest in your appetite?

If you complain of the interminable time that you have spent on the journey, you will be met with the grave assurance that it is safer to travel slow than fast, and that Spain has far fewer railway accidents than England or the United States. You may reply that she has far fewer trains, but we don't trouble ourselves about the law of averages in Spain, and the Spaniard solemnly assures you that nothing is gained by the alarming rapidity of Anglo-Saxon life except more speedy arrival at the grave.

If you dispute an hotel bill, longer than would be made out at the Ritz, for an entertainment which it would be complimentary to describe as mediocre, the landlord justifies his charges by explaining how much you get for your money in these days of progress, compared with what you lacked when life in Spain was cheaper, and after all what can a dollar or an *esterlina* (£) more or less matter to so great a lord as yourself, who must evidently be a millionaire to be able to travel so far from home merely for his own pleasure. You must also take into account, he says, that the tourist season only extends over a couple of months in the spring, thanks to the general ignorance abroad of the charms of the winter climate in that particular part of Spain. And how, he asks, is a poor man to keep his hotel open all the year round for the convenience of the English lord in the spring, unless the English lord pays enough when he comes to save him from bankruptcy during the other ten months of the year? And if these arguments—in the course of which the exorbitant items under discussion have been skilfully left out of the conversation—do not remove your objections to an extortionate bill, only one of two courses remains open to you. Either shake the dust of Spain off your feet and depart to some other land where the innkeepers realise that one contented guest will bring more money into their coffers than ten who depart in anger; or come with me right off the beaten track, and learn to know the real Spain, and to love, as I do, the real Spaniard.

Will he exploit the foreigner? He would rather give you the coat off his back than take a penny from you that he has not honestly earned; and he will do you all sorts of services with the native grace which has created the tradition that "every Spaniard is a gentleman." That class of Spaniard does not frequent the large cities, nor is he to be found by foreigners who seek him with the aid of an interpreter. Indeed, he is not worth the interpreter's powder and shot, for he cannot pay a commission on purchases made by the guileless traveller through the agency of his guide: he has nothing to sell save his honour and courtesy, and those are not marketable commodities. So he is left undisturbed in his beautiful mountain fastnesses or in his fertile plains, where only a select few will take the trouble to seek him out. And long may he remain there!

But when he is sought and found by the traveller who is not content to form his opinion of the whole country on his observations from the window of an hotel, then indeed it becomes evident that the heart of Spain beats strong and true beneath the froth of political passion and greed of gain which disfigure her outward semblance; and the veil of romance woven about her by the poet and the artist will enwrap that traveller, and he will return to Spain again and again, until he, like the writer, finds that into the web are woven some of his own heartstrings.

Then all the minor discomforts will become but mere matter for laughter, with an *arrière-pensée* of satisfaction at the barrier they set up against the flood of cheap trippers which, but for them, might overwhelm our Peninsula. And if sometimes we hear a note of tragedy beneath the light chorus of our opera, it does but deepen the music, as the purple shadows in an Andalucian street throw up the golden glow that bathes the whitewashed houses basking in the sun.

One word more. My readers may perhaps be surprised to find a "heretic" on good terms with many ecclesiastics in Spain, for there seems to be an impression abroad that this is a bigoted land where foreign non-Catholics are given the cold shoulder, if nothing worse.

Of course there are many Spaniards who feel strongly on the subject of their religion, and no doubt any one who publicly showed disrespect to objects of worship here would have cause to regret his lack of good manners. But so long as he behaves decently in sacred places, and observes a certain amount of discretion in conversation, the "heretic" need fear no discourtesy either from priests or people. Nor will he meet with any oppressive zeal in the direction of proselytising. The most embarrassing effort in that direction that I have known was the gentle remark from a nun: "You are so good already that you ought to be a little better. I pray daily that you may become a good Catholic." And an entertaining experience was that of a member of our family whom a distinguished divine announced his desire to convert—

"We will begin with a game of chess," said he, "and after that we will discuss dogmas."

The game of chess proved so engrossing that it lasted till bedtime, when the divine took his leave in a hurry, forgetting all about the dogmas.

The accusation of bigotry now—whatever may formerly have been the case—is as undeserved as many other unkind things that have been said about Spain.

"We are very much misrepresented by foreign writers," an intelligent young officer said to me one day; "if ever *you* write a book about Spain, I hope you will speak of us as you find us, so that for once we may have a little justice from a friend."

With this rather pathetic appeal in mind I have tried my best to describe Spain as I have found it, and I must maintain that I have done my Spanish friends no more than justice, even though those who do not know them write me down a prejudiced Hispanophil.

⁂ The accents marked on the Spanish words in the text are in most cases added merely as a guide to the pronunciation, for those who do not know the language.

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"A SUMMER AFTERNOON IN THE PATIO,"

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MY SPANISH YEAR

PART I.—SUMMER

CHAPTER I

Life in the patio—Locked doors and lovers—The uses of the grated gate—Courting under difficulties: the keyhole and the crack—Manolo and Carmencita, a romance in real life.

THE great event to which the whole creation moves in the eyes of a Spanish señorita—not being a resident in Madrid—is the annual fair in the capital town of her province. This generally takes place in the spring, and therefore, for her, the spring is the end and not the beginning of the year, looked forward to with increasing excitement through autumn and winter, while to that young lady summer is but the beginning of the long year which has to be lived through until spring and LA FERIA, in capital letters, comes round again.

I, like the Spanish señorita, will begin my Spanish year with the summer, if not exactly for the same reason, for one akin to it. The great heat of summer, with its dust, mosquitoes, and flies, is the most trying time in all the twelve months in this country, as the spring is the most enjoyable; and wise people keep the best to the last.

Let it not be supposed, however, that summer in Spain has no compensations. They are many and various, and not the least among them is the life of the patio, which begins in June and ends in September.

The patio is always spoken of as one of the peculiar charms of southern Spain, but how many of my readers, who have not visited the country, know exactly what it is? I myself, before I came here, had a vague idea that it was something in the nature of a yard, and I remember that on seeing a huge *corral* for cattle, attached to a farm-house near Tarifa and so large as to be visible from the steamer as we approached Gibraltar, I asked whether that was a patio!

The Andalucian house of to-day is in essentials the direct descendant of the house built by the Greeks who colonised Andalucia, or Tartessus, as they called it, some six or seven centuries B.C. The *pylon*, now called the *zaguan*, is the vestibule leading from the street door direct into the *peristyle*, the open courtyard round which the house is built, now known as the *patio*. In the daytime the *zaguan* is open to the street, but entrance to the patio is barred by a large iron grille, which can only be opened from within. The Romans continued the Greek form of house, with slight structural modifications, and added the *solarium*, an open gallery or arcade intended for basking in the sun. This feature is common in the older houses of Andalucia to-day, although those of more modern construction lack it, and the inmates when they wish to sun themselves go up to the *azotea*, the flat brick roof on which the family washing is usually hung out to dry. The names *azotea* and *zaguan* are both Arabic, showing, were demonstration needed, that neither the Visigoths nor the Arabs made any essential alterations in the structure of the houses they found when they respectively conquered Andalucia.

The patio is a central court off which numerous rooms open, always including the summer dining-room and the summer kitchen, their winter counterparts being on the floor above. There is also a *sala* or reception-room, and in old houses this may have beautifully carved Arabic roof-beams, filled in with fine fifteenth- or sixteenth-century lustre tiles: for while the upper stories are frequently modernised and sometimes brought quite up to date in the matter of bathrooms, ample windows, and effective ventilation, the patio with the dark rooms surrounding it is very seldom reconstructed. It is only used as a refuge from the summer heat, and the architects of to-day wisely refrain from interfering with the shadowy lights and cool refreshing temperature which make life enjoyable even when the thermometer outside stands at 110 or more in the shade.

Great doors—sometimes of mahogany, cedar, or lignum-vitæ four inches thick, studded with large brass or iron nails, and adorned with corner pieces, lock, key, and knockers, all richly wrought to match

—shut off the *zaguan* from the street. All day long these stand open, as though inviting the passer-by to step in and admire the patio within, the whole of which can be seen through the *cancela* or iron grille already mentioned: but at night they are closed and secured with a huge iron bolt, often two or three feet long. The noise made by the closing of these doors at night, and the shrieks of the great bolts, which are never by any chance oiled, can be heard one after the other all along the street, and are liable to interfere a good deal with the beauty sleep of the stranger. But, unless there is a *velada* or a *tertulia* going on, the noise is all over by 11 p.m. or earlier, because custom requires that respectable houses should present blank faces to the moonbeams a full hour before midnight.

If you ask how this can be when every one knows that Spanish gentlemen make a practice of turning night into day at their cafés and clubs, I must call your attention to the *postigo*, a little low wicket opening in one of the great doors. The stern father, forgetful of his own youthful escapades, or determined that his son shall not follow in his footsteps, may order the door to be locked at eleven every night; but there is always a corruptible servant or a tender-hearted sister on the watch to lift the latch of the *postigo* and screen the young scapegrace from the paternal ire.

We may take it for granted that when the sister connives at her brother's late hours, it is not to enable him to gamble at his club or drink more than is good for him at the café. It must be a love affair that enlists pretty Amparo's sympathies and keeps her out of her bed to all hours. She has probably been listening to the professions of devotion of her own forbidden lover until long after midnight, and thus all her sympathies are with Manolo, who also has lost his heart without permission from the parents.

In these cases the soft nothings have to be breathed between the bars of the stout iron gratings which are placed outside every ground-floor window, not only as a precaution against malefactors, but, as a young Spaniard once told me, "to keep the girls in and the boys out." To English ideas this seems a poor enough way to make love, but in some country towns even the grating is not considered sufficient protection for the youth and beauty within, and I know of one case in which the grandfather, a blue-blooded old aristocrat and a good deal of a martinet, had wire netting fixed all over the ground-floor windows to prevent his granddaughters being kissed between the bars! Such are the difficulties attendant on *pelando la pava* (plucking the turkey) or *comiendo hierro* (eating iron), as these grating courtships are called.

In old houses, no matter how large, it is not unusual to see only a single window, with its inevitable grating, on the ground floor of the street front —a survival of the Oriental idea of the seclusion of women, for down to the sixteenth century, in southern Spain, no windows at all opened on to the street. This one window, which generally lights the porter's lodge, will be appropriated by the daughter of the house if she encourages a secret admirer. The servants are always on the side of romance, and will not hesitate to aid the lovers by every means in their power, so the old porter, who is supposed by his mistress to see that no illicit interviews go on after dark, finds no difficulty in taking a nap in his rocking-chair in the patio, while *la niña*, whom he has known and spoilt from her cradle, sits at his window and listens to the passionate whispers of her admirer in the street.

Meanwhile the maid-servants have their own sweethearts to attend to, and, failing a second window, it might seem difficult to get into communication, for the daughters of the respectable poor are as strictly chaperoned as the señoritas, and a girl would lose her character if she had an "evening out," unless under the wing of her mother or some female friend of mature years. But love laughs at locksmiths, and a friend of mine told me how he learnt by personal experience the way in which the courting is managed in such cases, after the street door is closed.

He was going home along the main street of the country town in which his father lived. The night was dark and the street lamps few and dim, and he stumbled over something soft lying along the pavement in front of the door of a large house. A sibilant whispering relieved his first fear that an assassin's knife had been at work. It was a young man lying full length on the ground, with his lips at the crack under the door, talking to his sweetheart, who lay on the floor inside, while another maid-servant and her lover had possession of the keyhole, and the señorita in the grated window modestly pulled the curtain to hide herself from my friend's glance when she heard his footsteps approach.

These be the amenities of summer. In winter fewer lovers are to be seen about the streets, because bad colds and stiff necks are apt to be caught by young men—even though wrapped in the voluminous cloak so dear to romance—who stand for many hours out of doors "eating iron" with their feet in a puddle, staring up at the beloved in the balcony of the first floor whereon she resides from October to June. Indeed, I know of one love affair that was broken off, never to be renewed, because the girl took offence at the prolonged absence of her admirer, who, poor fellow, was in bed with influenza and unable to get the sad intelligence conveyed to his goddess at her window.

In this case the mother's opposition had reached an acute stage, and the love-sick Manolo's explanation fell into the wrong hands. Intimation was sent, as from Carmencita, that her legitimate fiancé was offended by Manolo's attentions, and that they were therefore unwelcome: and as the unfortunate youth on his sick-bed had no means of getting into direct communication with his charmer, he had to sigh with such patience as he might until the weather improved and he could return to the window bars, and demand an explanation of that cruel message. Meanwhile Carmencita was told that Manolo's absence was due to the attractions of a new *novia*: in which, seeing that these loves of the grating are taken up and dropped as easily as a travelling acquaintance, there was nothing inherently improbable. So she wept profusely at his supposed inconstancy, and when she learnt the truth adopted the last resource open to the heart-broken señorita—hysterics, and threats to refuse food (a mode of coercing the authorities in vogue among revolting daughters here long before it was adopted by the suffragettes), and to fling herself from the *azotea* into the patio below, unless she were allowed to write to Manolo and assure him of her undying devotion.

But alas! Manolo, although of good family, had no money and no prospects, whereas the distinguished Señor Conde de las Patillas Blancas,[1] although he had begun life as an assistant in a grocer's shop, had gone to Cuba before the war with America had destroyed that mine of riches for Spaniards who knew how to make their account out of it, and having returned wealthy had revived a title to which he may or may not have had a legal claim. Thus he was now in every respect a most desirable *parti* for the fair Carmencita.

Só Manolo rose from his bed of sickness to read in the local paper that "the aristocratic and affluent Señor Conde de las Patillas Blancas had asked the hand of the exquisitely beautiful young Señorita Carmen Perez y Dominguez, daughter of the Marquises[1] of Campos Abandonados"—literally "deserted fields," but perhaps best paraphrased into the familiar English title of Bareacres.

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[1] Count of the White Whiskers. There are many such titles among the Spanish nobility, dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when royalty often bestowed titles referring to personal peculiarities.

As Manolo well knew, this was the end. For not only is the mother in Spain absolute mistress in the matter of her daughter's marriage, but Carmencita herself, once she had shed the conventional tears over the loss of her lover, was perfectly well aware on which side her bread was buttered. Both these young people were intimate friends of mine, and if I had consented to act as go-between when I went to congratulate Carmencita on her engagement, and incidentally provoked a torrent of tears by remarking on Manolo's fortunate recovery, it is just possible that she might have made a fresh effort to get her own way. But it is the part of wisdom not to meddle with Spanish love affairs, which are seldom or never quite what they seem, and in her inconstant little heart Carmencita certainly thanked me for refusing to carry any messages. As for Manolo, he consoled himself by marrying an heiress a year or so after, and disappears from this veracious history.

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[1] The wife in Spain, from the Queen downwards, merges her identity in that of her husband when they are spoken of together, and we have *los Reyes*, the Kings, instead of the King and Queen; *los Duques*, the Dukes, instead of the Duke and Duchess; and so on down the whole gamut of society. The practical convenience of this abbreviation is so obvious that I make no apology for adopting it.

CHAPTER II

Social life in a mountain town—Moslem traditions—The etiquette of betrothal—Wedding presents—The trousseau—Little tragedies of Spain—Dramatic Carmencita—Compensations for the Countess.

If I were to describe the scene of the wedding where it actually took place, it is just possible that some of those concerned, if they happened to see this book, might recognise themselves. I will therefore transfer it to the picturesque mountain town of Ronda, which, although frequented by tourists, and boasting two really comfortable hotels, still preserves some peculiar local customs.

Of these perhaps the most noticeable is the Moslem tradition of the separation of the sexes. The numerous travellers, both native and foreign, who spend a day in the town on their way to or from Algeciras in the spring or autumn, have as yet made no impression on the conservatism of the Rondeños, and one has only to stroll up and down the Paseo de la Merced on a Sunday night in summer to see that social customs in Ronda are quite unaffected by contact with the outer world.

The heat of the day being over, and a cool west wind rustling the leaves of the avenues of planes, the purple peak of La Liba, which forms the *clou* of a charming picture, is suddenly blotted out as the electric light is switched on. In the matter of street lighting Spain is by no means behind the age. The Spanish love for a blaze of light out of doors probably accounts for the strides made by the electric lighting industry during the last few years. It is true that often even well-to-do people are still content to illuminate their houses with a cheap paraffin lamp, or even with a *candil* of brass with its tiny wick fed with olive oil. But once these lovers of display realised that a few arc lamps hung along the Paseo turned night into day, and that electricity would enable the gilded youth to display his new straw hat of the English shape, his beautiful red tie, and his shiny brown boots at least as well at midnight as at noon, the towns found money for street lighting without apparent difficulty, and now there is hardly a village, even in the plains where there is no water-power available, that is not lit by electricity. I have seen electric lamps at every street corner in a place to which there is no means of access save a mule track, and no contact with the outer world save a visit from the postman on his donkey two or three times a week, if there happen to be any letters to deliver.

Ronda with its wonderful Tajo, through which the Guadalevin rushes in a torrent during the winter rains, was provided with electric light when I first visited it ten or eleven years ago. At that time the power used to fail ignominiously in the summer, at which season all the water of the shrunken river has to be turned into the irrigation channels, as has been the legal right of the numerous market gardeners in the valley from Arabic times. Now steam has been brought in to supplement the water-power, and the lighting of the principal hotels, and above all of the Paseo, is as brilliant as any one can desire.

In summer it is too hot to stroll about with comfort in the daytime, and the youth of both sexes had little opportunity of contemplating each other's charms at that season until artificial light came to the rescue. Now, especially on a Sunday night, the whole town crowds into the Paseo, where under powerful arc lights the young people can admire each other to their hearts' content.

One of the curious customs of the place is that all the pretty girls march up and down, from two to six or seven together, while their portly mothers and aunts sit and fan themselves on the stone benches and chairs ranged along both sides of the walk. The young men also march up and down, also in groups, but carefully confining themselves to either side of the broad space in the centre occupied by the girls. Each town in Spain is socially a law to itself, and it seems to be contrary to Ronda etiquette for the men to walk with the girls under any condition whatever, although in other places the presence of a duenna makes it quite correct.

Engaged couples may enter the Paseo together (of course properly chaperoned) but they must not join in the promenade. They may only sit under the trees with the mother or the aunt, and console themselves for their enforced retirement by squeezing each other's hands under cover of the shadows cast by the overhanging boughs. But if the girl happens to come late, her fiancé gets a chance to show himself. Then he may walk up and down as much as he pleases in the midst of the swarm of girls, pretending to be looking for his sweetheart. I watched Carmencita's elderly lover at this performance one Sunday night, and every time he got well into the focus of one of the arc lamps he stopped short with the light full on him, glancing this way and that with assumed anxiety as to the whereabouts of the lady, although he knew, and she knew, and all their friends and acquaintances knew, that his charmer would not appear till the band began to play at ten o'clock.

Carmencita's wedding was fixed for July, partly because the summer, when the boys are home from school and university, is the gayest time here, but mainly because propriety demands that the religious ceremony shall take place within quite a few weeks of that known as "asking for the hand"—in other words, the signing of the marriage contract. The *noviazgo*, which is not strictly speaking an engagement, but rather a protracted courtship which may or may not end in a wedding, sometimes goes on for years and is then broken off, without any blame attaching to the jilt, be he male or female. It is quite an understood thing that there is no moral obligation to marry as long as the hand of the lady has not been formally "asked." But once this has been done, not by the lover but by some relative of the elder generation, the marriage is regarded as the necessary consequence, and a man or woman who declined to fulfil the engagement after that ceremony had been gone through would be *mal mirado*—badly looked at—which is more or less equivalent to being sent to Coventry.

So when I heard that Carmen was finally engaged I knew it would not be long before I received an invitation to the wedding, which came in due course, printed in silver on a highly glazed card. It was not strictly speaking an invitation at all, for it merely set out at full length the names and titles of the bride and bridegroom and their parents (and Spanish names and titles are as long as a Presbyterian sermon), and announced the day and hour of the wedding without "requesting the pleasure of my company." The opposite side of the card contained an identical announcement on the part of the bridegroom.

On the day before the wedding I went, by Carmencita's special request, to see her trousseau, which to the Andalucian bride is even more exciting than the wedding presents.

She received me in a dainty *bata*, a garment which is a cross between a tea-gown and a pinafore, with her hair loose and falling below her waist, and her eyes were so bright and her laugh so gay that I felt sure she was as contented as were her parents with the affluent future before her. She took me to the winter reception-rooms upstairs, which looked as if they were prepared for a sale of work. On a number of tables and chairs were displayed the presents—innumerable sofa cushions, embroidered night-dress cases, crocheted table-covers, antimacassars, lace d'oyleys, and so forth; with the more solid offerings of glass, china and plate from older relatives half lost to sight among the hand-made gifts from Carmencita's schoolfellows and girl friends.

But the presents were completely eclipsed by the far more important personal outfit of the little bride. Trestle tables filled the middle of the long room from end to end, and looked something like reefs under the froth of breaking waves, so covered were they with house and table linen, towels and side-cloths edged with wonderfully complicated *fleco morisco* ("Arabic fringe"), and a fluff and foam of personal wear of fine lawn, lace, and muslin enough to last a lifetime, all made by Carmencita and her sisters and her friends, and all exquisitely embroidered with her initials in an endless variety of interlacing monograms. The wealthiest English or American bride might be proud to wear such lingerie as I saw there.

As soon as her tiny hands can hold a needle, the Spanish señorita is taught by the nuns at her school to sew in this dainty fashion, and from her earliest childhood she devotes the fruits of her labours to furnishing her trousseau; for here the bride brings all the house linen as part of her dowry, and long before she is old enough to have a lover her careful mother will provide the huge quantities of fine linen and lace, and the pounds of embroidery silk and cotton which are required for the proper plenishing of one of those great carved chests in which the daughters of the house have stored their wedding outfits for centuries past.

If the daughter passes out of her teens without being married the chest will be full long before it is required, and indeed sometimes it is never needed at all; for unless a girl is rich, or of distinguished family, or, if poor, remarkably beautiful, it is quite likely that no one will ever ask for her hand.

And sometimes poverty descends on the family, and the daughters, orphaned and penniless when already past their youth and unable to earn any sort of a living, are reduced to selling one by one all the produce of so many years of industry to satisfy the claims of hunger, or, if the old house has been sold, to pay the rent of some wretched little room which in their prosperous days they would hardly have given to a maid-servant. I have witnessed pathetic scenes when ladies of gentle birth have come to me in the dusk of evening to ask if I will buy some dainty embroidery or delicate pillow lace "to help a friend who has lost her money." And to the end they will try to salve their hurt pride by keeping up this transparent fiction, holding the bedspread or pillow-case upside down, in the hope that until they have left with the money in their pockets I may not notice that the initials worked on it are their own.[1]

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[1] As the use of their surnames by Spanish wives is confusing to a foreigner, it may be well to explain that both men and women use the family name of the father and the mother. Thus Antonio Lopez marries Maria Garcia, and his children's family name is Lopez y Garcia. One of his sons marries Luisa Ramirez, and *his* children are called Lopez y Ramirez, and so on. A married woman keeps her maiden name. Thus if Maria Garcia y Perez marries Antonio Lopez y Rodriguez, she will be

But these are the little tragedies that lie beneath the surface, and we must not dwell on them, for we have not done yet with the trousseau of our Carmencita.

She was only seventeen when her fate was decided, so her chest was not quite full; but fortunately there were enough nearly finished sheets and pillow-cases and so forth in those of her younger sisters to supply all deficiencies; and every afternoon through the weeks before the wedding the three little *marquesitas* and their girl friends had sat together in their cool patio under the orange and palm trees in the shade of the heavy canvas awning, stitching away for dear life, amid an incessant prattle about clothes and lovers, and a continual munching of chocolates flavoured with cinnamon.

Space for the unknown bridegroom's initials had as usual been left on all the house linen when it was made, but in this case only the Count's coronet had to be worked, and a heavy strain on girlish invention was thus avoided, for there is not much variety about a coronet, while it takes a good deal of imagination to vary an initial several dozen times.

Oddly enough, my admiration of some beautiful

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described in formal documents—a will, for instance—or in an announcement of death, as Maria Garcia y Perez, esposa de Antonio Lopez y Rodriguez, although her acquaintances speak of her as La Señora de Lopez, or more shortly, La de Lopez. Until they get well on into middle life, women, married or single, are always addressed by their Christian name without any prefix, even by men on a first introduction.

stitching in this heraldic ornament seemed to upset Carmencita's equanimity, and in an instant her sunny smile and gay chatter turned into a tempest of sobs and tears.

"You are cruel, barbarous, Doña Elena, to remind me of all I am losing! How can you dream that I am consoled by being a rich Countess for the loss of the wealth of love lavished upon me by my adored Manolo? I am a martyr, a victim to the ambition of my parents! Even now at the last moment I think I shall declare that my heart is Manolo's and I will never marry any but him! *Madre mia de mi alma!* how terrible is this life! Better that I had flung myself from the roof, as I wanted to do when they forbade me to see my Manolo: then I should have been spared this torment, this broken heart which will end by dragging me into the grave!"

I was pretty sure that the theatrical outburst was provoked by a more or less conscious desire to play up to the situation and to be consistent to the last: for Carmencita, as I have hinted, had already made me her confidante, and Spaniards are born actors. She would feel better all her life for having dramatically rounded off the play to her audience of one, and I would not spoil the climax by any lack of sympathy.

"True, true, my child," I answered, "you are indeed a martyr, but it is to duty. Think of the season in Madrid that you will be able to share with your sisters—the theatres, the receptions, the dances! With your birth and the Count's wealth you will certainly be received at Court, and what higher destiny could be offered to you than to take Pura and Dolores away from this dreary village into all the delights of the capital? Have courage, my noble girl, and crush the dictates of your heart for their sake, and, believe me, happiness will be yours."

"True, Doña Elena; how beautiful an ideal you put before me! And I hear that Manolo has gone away and will not be back for six months, so what should I gain by refusing to marry the Count? And it would make a terrible scandal. And then, have you seen my wedding dress? It is too lovely for words! Do you know, it has a train two yards long! Cesar insisted; he says I am so little I must have a train to give me presence. I have never worn a long dress in my life, and I am so afraid I shall stumble over it. How dreadful if I made myself ridiculous in the church, before all Ronda! Doña Elena, did you have a train two yards long to your wedding dress, and did you find it difficult to manage?"

The melodrama was over, Carmencita was once more all smiles and merriment, and my suggestion that she should put the wedding dress on and practise walking up and down the patio in it for my benefit sent her and all her companions into screams of laughter. She had made her little oblation to the god of love, and now was ready to enjoy to the full the material fruits of her sacrifice.

She made me promise that I would come to her house and accompany the wedding party to the church, which is only a few yards from the ancestral home of the Campos Abandonados. I told her she had better let me efface myself in the back of the church, because I had no wedding garment in my suit-case and should do the party no credit.

"Don't be absurd," she retorted, kissing me affectionately. "You look like a Duchess with a black mantilla over your white hair, and if you haven't got yours here, Mamma shall find one for you."

Who could resist the pretty creature? And she meant every word of it, at any rate while she was speaking. But she really was sincere in her desire that I should be there as an intimate friend, not a mere acquaintance, and when I arrived shortly before two o'clock on the eventful afternoon I found little ten-year-old Lola, otherwise Dolores, waiting for me at the door, having been ordered by the bride to see that I was taken special care of, "because being a foreigner I might not know exactly where to go, and thus might fail to enjoy myself."

Such consideration really surprised me. Carmen might well have been excused for forgetting, on this great day of her life, that one of her guests was a foreigner; yet she had not only planned for my pleasure, but, as I found, had asked more than one of her old friends to look out for me and see that I was placed where I could have a good view of the ceremony before the side altar of the Virgen del Carmen, at which she had worshipped throughout her short life.

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THE CHURCH WHERE CARMENCITA WAS MARRIED.

CHAPTER III

The wedding—Our Lady of the Carmen: her lady-in-waiting—The ancestral house of the Campos Abandonados—The kissing habit in Spain—Muscatel and Manzanilla—Arabic sweetmeats—King Alfonso and the convent *yemas*—The bride's dance—Mantillas and a hat—Good-bye to Carmencita.

THIS image of the Virgin of the Carmen has no particular artistic merit, but Carmencita was promoted to being her "lady-in-waiting" when she left school, and had taken great pride in keeping "her" Virgin's wardrobe in perfect order; and to-day she had gone very early to Mass and had dressed the image, for the last time, in the festival robe of eighteenth-century brocade and the tulle veil she had herself embroidered to present to her Virgin on her first communion. She had also filled the silver vases with the tall stiff bouquets which are so much admired here, and had offered quite a number of gilded wax candles for a blessing on her marriage.

And now she stood before the altar—her own altar—with her first long dress trailing behind her (she had not stumbled over it, but had made a most dignified entrance) and placed her helpless-looking little white hand in that of the stout, commonplace man, over thirty years her senior, whose word was henceforth to be her law (for a married woman in Spain has practically no civil rights), and who had already made it evident that he would be a jealous husband. It may, however, be remarked that marital jealousy is regarded by many Spanish wives as rather a compliment than otherwise, as showing that their husbands think them worth being jealous of.

The ceremony was soon over, and while the bride and bridegroom, the bride's parents and godparents, and her brothers and next sister, went into the sacristy with the priest to sign and witness the register, little Lola slipped her hand into mine.

"Carmencita told me to take you to our house now," she said. "I am too little to witness for her, and she was afraid you would go away, and she wants you to see her dance in her wedding dress before she leaves with Cesar."

She led me out of the church and along the badly paved street, which was lined with spectators anxious to see the new Countess whom they had known from a baby.

"There are only two carriages," said Lola, "mamma's and Cesar's. Can you believe it? Carmencita has to come home all alone with Cesar in his carriage! She cried last night, and so did Pura and I, we all cried together. Fancy having to be left all alone with that horrid old man! Do you know, she is afraid he will kiss her, and his ugly blue nose will disarrange her hair. That is the only thing she is afraid of—being alone with him."

A Spanish girl is never, under any circumstances, left alone with her fiancé, until she is actually married to him. There is always a mother, or an aunt, or some other female relative present to superintend the love-making. Small wonder that stolen interviews at the grating, with no listeners but the moon, have their charm. And perhaps the happiest marriages are those which come to pass, sometimes after years of parental opposition, between lovers whose courtship began thus. They at least have a chance of getting to know each other, free from the restraint of the chaperone whose attentive ear makes all real confidence impossible.

The house of the Campos Abandonados in Ronda is one of the most perfect examples of its kind in Spain. To the right of the spacious *zaguan*, as large as many a patio, are the stables, empty now, save for the Marchioness's mules. The sixteen mangers are pure Arabic work, built into the wall, with a cusped arch over each. Passing these we get to the "modern" part of the house, which was renovated and "restored" in the prosperous sixteenth century, when gold poured into Spain from her new colonies across the Atlantic. Beyond this patio, the walls of which are covered with roses, jessamine, and other creepers planted in the ground, we get a glimpse of the inner one, cool and shady under its white awning. This is the summer sitting-room, furnished with easy-chairs and lounges all gay with bright calico covers, tables with work-baskets, photographs, and knick-knacks, and the other trifles which ladies of gentle birth all the world over collect about them, books and newspapers only excepted, for it is a rare thing to see anything to read in a Spanish lady's sitting-room.

This inner patio is all just as it was when the Arabs ruled in Ronda: columns, capitals, carved beams, round arches—nothing has been altered since the conquest of the old town by the Catholic kings. In the mountains it is the fashion to paint every brick within reach with a solution of red ochre, and the maids, in their desire to add a touch of extra glory to the place for the wedding, had painted the arches as well as the brick floors. On one side of the arch nearest the staircase is a stone roughly carved and springing from a base very much older than the Arab invasion, and this was left of its own yellow stone colour, so that its extreme age was apparent. For this is one of those Græco-Roman houses of which I have spoken, and each of the successive races who have inhabited it used the remains of their predecessors' building and carving when they in their turn added to it. There was a third patio beyond this, from which one looked sheer down into the ravine 500 feet below, past arched openings giving light and air to subterranean chambers under the house, which are often said to be prison cells, but are in fact *mazmorras* for the storage of corn, wine, and oil. Indeed, there still exist in one of these cellars, half built, half cut out of the rock, a number of enormous oil-jars, quite large enough for the Forty Thieves to hide in.

When I reached the house with Lola I found the inner patio transformed. Everything movable had been taken away, and the arcades on all four sides had been filled with chairs: the piano had been pushed to one side, the whole centre of the court was bare, and the blind organist of one of the churches, a couple of guitarists and a man with a *bandurria* (a tenor guitar) were busy tuning up, to the accompaniment of the shrill whistling of half a dozen canaries and the excited screams of the Marchioness's pet parrot.

Two great seventeenth-century mirrors in handsome carved frames painted red and gold had been brought downstairs and hung on two pillars opposite each other, and Lola made straight for one of these the moment we came in, to see, she said, if they reflected properly, but really to study her own appearance.

"Carmencita was determined to have them brought down," she told me: "*Papaito* [diminutive of Papa] objected because he says they are so old that the frames might get broken, and they have never been moved since they were made; but Carmen said she *must* see what she looked like, dancing *seguidillas* in her satin train, and Mamma said of course she should have what she wanted, now that she had been so good and obedient about marrying the Conde. *Ay de mi de mi alma!* I wonder what my husband will be like when *my* turn comes! I do hope he won't be quite so old and ugly as Cesar."

Her further confidences were cut short by the arrival of her father and mother in their ancient family coach, with leather curtains in place of windows, drawn by two great black mules whose bells jingled so loudly and the brass of whose harness was so bright as almost to hide the deplorable state of the leather. The portly Marchioness had barely time to recover her breath after the exertion of getting out, and to take up her post of honour in the patio, before the bride and bridegroom appeared, he almost as fat and short-winded as his mother-in-law, she looking extremely pretty with a flush on her olive cheeks and her usually sombre heavy-lidded eyes alight with excitement and pleasure at the openly expressed admiration of the crowd all along the road from the church.

The instant they came in the whole place burst into life, for every corner was invaded by the number of guests who had been invited and the still greater number of those who had not. The well-to-do friends and relations were followed by the poor ones, then came the household servants, old and young, with their friends and relations, and then everybody, without distinction, who wanted to see the bride and wish her joy. And as these last seemed to be half the town, for a short time we were packed like sardines, while the new little Condesa, standing at her mother's side, was receiving resounding kisses on both cheeks from every woman, child, and old man in the crowd, the young men being apparently the only ones who might not claim the privilege.

The amount of kissing done in Spain is extraordinary. Children as a matter of course put up their faces to the merest stranger who speaks to them, middle-aged ladies on notoriously bad terms would think it a grave breach of courtesy not to kiss loudly on meeting and parting in an afternoon call, young girls embrace effusively in the most public places, fathers sit with their babies on their knees, mumbling their fat little hands by the hour together, and all the servants expect to be kissed by the ladies of the family when they start on or return from a journey—a most embarrassing custom if the mistress is an Englishwoman. More than once I have been in a shop when a woman has come in and put her baby on the counter, whereupon the shopman has left me to go and kiss the child, whom he probably had never seen before. Strangers will often stop short before a nice-looking child, and exclaim "*Qué mono!*" (what a pretty little thing) and bestow on it a couple of kisses that can be heard all down the street. Of late an attempt has been made in Madrid, at the instigation of the Queen, to stop this promiscuous kissing, and for one season at least it was the fashion to hang a label round the babies' necks when out walking, on which was written, "Please don't kiss me." But there is no diminution of embraces outside of the capital.

As soon as every claimant to the cheeks of Carmencita had been satisfied, the uninvited guests went away almost as suddenly as they had come in, and the rest of the gathering moved on into the inner court, and turned their attention to tobacco, wine, and sweet cakes. The sons of the house and their friends carried round a tray of glasses in one hand and a bottle of Malaga, Manzanilla, or Muscatel in the other, and each guest was expected to empty his glass at once and replace it on the tray for the use of his neighbour. Then came the bride's sisters and their friends with trays full of sweetmeats and pastry made of almond paste, cocoa-nut paste, chocolate, custard with a variety of flavourings, and other sweets of Arabic origin, with untranslatable names, the recipes for making which are carefully preserved in a few convents, whose inmates sometimes have little left to live on save what they can earn by the sale of their cakes. Among these there is a popular kind called *yemas*, because made from the yolks of eggs (*yemas*). They look like the yolk of a hard-boiled egg, and are covered with transparent caramel of a surprising stickiness.

And here I cannot refrain from digressing to tell a little tale about King Alfonso.

The first time that he and the Queen came to Seville was when their first baby, the little Prince of Asturias, was a few months old. The King, whose active habits and disregard of ceremony are well known, went out on the morning after their arrival for a walk through what is called the "Moorish" quarter of the old town, a maze of narrow streets little visited by sight-seers. Here he stopped at a certain convent famous for its sweets, and asked the "mother" who opened the little grille in the street door for "a packet of *yemas* for his wife and child." The good nun hesitated: she had not the remotest idea who her customer was, and the Mother Superior, she knew, had set aside all the best of the last batch to send as an offering to the baby Heir to the Throne.

"Pardon me, Señor," she stammered, divided between her desire not to lose a possible peseta and the difficulty of reconciling a refusal with her natural courtesy; "I fear—to-day—it is impossible—we—we," and then, with a brilliant inspiration, "we do not sell to foreigners."

"Oh, that's all right," said the King, "I am a Spaniard by birth and education, and my present address is the Alcazar of Seville."

The conclusion of the purchase may be left to the imagination.

I have never been able to manage more than two of these luscious sweets at a time, and little Lola became quite distressed when her sixth invitation to eat more and still more of the sugary delicacies proved unavailing.

"I know what you will like," she said at last, "I am sure you will like that, for our North American friend[1] said it was the best thing in Ronda. It is time to hand those trays now, so I will run and get mine for you."

And the next moment Lola was at my side again, pressing upon me slices of raw smoked ham, to be offered and eaten with the fingers, just as is done with dainties at wedding parties in Constantinople and Beyrout to-day.

Undoubtedly the Andalucian acorn-fed hams are excellent, but it was rather a shock to have to start upon ham, and raw ham at that, when one had already eaten too many sweetmeats.

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[1] To Spaniards "America" means Spanish America: the inhabitants of the U.S. are always *Norteamericanos* or *Yanquis*.

"Don't you like *ham*?" said poor Lola, her mouth drooping with disappointment. And then a brilliant idea struck her. She dumped her tray down on a vacant chair and ran off to the kitchen, returning in triumph with half of one of those iron-hard rolls known as *roscas*. This she thrust into my hand and planted a slice of ham on the top of it, saying with a sigh of relief—

"I know that is what you want, for the North American lady never would eat ham without bread. I *am* so glad I thought of it, because only a few minutes ago Carmencita told me to be sure and get you everything you like until she has time to come and talk to you. But now we are going to dance, so she won't have any time to spare yet."

To eat raw ham with one's fingers, as all the ladies round me were doing quite simply and naturally—throwing the fragments that remained on the floor under their chairs—may seem peculiar to our notions of table etiquette; but nobody would laugh at these "country manners" who saw, as I did, the innate courtesy that lay beneath. That the bride at a fashionable wedding should have told off one of her sisters to show special attention to an elderly lady of no particular importance, simply and solely because "being a foreigner she might feel strange," illustrates the traditional courtesy of well-bred Spaniards. And perhaps this funny little incident will explain to some of my readers why I love the real Spain and the real unconventionalised Spaniard.

Now the piano, the guitars, and the bandurria struck up the *seguidillas*, whereupon Carmen and her sister Pura at once stood up to dance. The object of the two mirrors became apparent, for at every turn of the dance the bride was able to see herself in a fresh attitude, and her childlike delight in the folds of her long train, as she watched it sweeping after and around her, was a pretty sight. She had the reputation of being the best dancer in her native town, and loud cries of *Muy bien* and *Olé* greeted the conclusion of the performance.

All these dances consist of what are called *coplas* (couplets), because the movements of the dance were originally interludes in the singing of verses, often traditional, among which extempore references to the happenings of the moment are introduced. Thus when the girls dance without any singing, a series of movements follow in sequence, lasting twenty minutes or more, according to the number of *coplas* that they may perform. To the uninitiated all the dances, and still more all the *coplas*, seem to be pretty much alike, when danced by girls only. But when one sees these dances performed professionally by a man and a woman together, one realises that every step, every turn of the head, and every movement of the body and arms, has had its origin in a drama of passion, of coquetry, or of courtship. One also realises why it is not permissible for youths and girls to dance them together, save in the intimacy of a family gathering, and why even then the man must, so to speak, only play at taking part, snapping his fingers in response to the rattle of the castanets as the girl waves them over his head, and holding himself rigidly upright while his partner sways and bends as she whirls before and round him.

The whole thing is essentially Oriental, and it needs only the glance of an eye or the turn of a hand to convert the graceful movements of ladies in a drawing-room into an exposition of sensuality.

One understands therefore why Spanish ladies are so careful how they allow their daughters to dance even the apparently harmless *seguidillas* with men instead of girls for their partners.

The usual form of concerted performance is for the men to sing the *coplas* and the girls to dance between each of them; and when Carmencita had finished her performance, the guitarists struck up the rattling chords that preface the *Peteneras.* After much pressing on the part of the girls, Carmencita's eldest brother Paco, otherwise Francisco, was induced to sing, and here is a translation of his first and last verses, which he sang to the strange quavering air without tune or rhythm, and full of the odd intervals and curious turns and flourishes peculiar to this kind of music, while the spectators accompanied him with a fusillade of hand-clapping and shouts of applause which burst out at every pause.

"My *novia* has deserted me,
Child of my heart;
Thinking that I should grieve for her,
Child of my heart.

I am not sure whether I shall take another sweetheart now,
Or wait and look about me through the summer.

When I am on my death-bed,
    Child of my heart,
Seat thyself at my bed-head,
    Child of my heart.
Bring me a good veal cutlet,
Two fowls and a nice beefsteak,
And if this does not seem to thee enough
Bring me anything else that occurs to thee."

The wedding party thought this screamingly funny, and there were shouts of *Otra copla! Otra copla!* (another verse) when he had finished. But he made a sign to his second sister Pura, and another to the musicians, and the dancing began again.

The *peteneras* are more dramatic and crisper in movement than the *seguidillas*, and the brother and sister did a great deal of rhythmical hand-clapping and stamping, curiously at variance with the sentimental refrain of the song. When it was over, Pura dropped into the nearest seat, panting and fanning herself vigorously, while Paco slipped away to join the men, who from first to last sat in the outer patio and seemed to take no interest in the proceedings within, except when occasionally one of them planted himself in the entrance to commend some girl whose dancing he admired.

Proceedings became increasingly lively as the afternoon advanced, though the decorum was never relaxed. It got hotter and hotter, and the air grew suffocating under the awning, but there was no pause in the dancing. As soon as one couple of girls ended another stepped out, and sometimes half a dozen were dancing together. All the grown-up girls wore high combs and white mantillas, which never seemed to become disarranged, and quantities of natural flowers on their heads and breasts, chiefly jessamine blossoms pulled off their stems and fastened together to form large rosettes—another survival of Arabic customs. One would have expected to see the floor strewn with the flowers as the dancing went on, but I knew that every girl had spent at least an hour arranging her head-dress before she started for the wedding, and had taken good care that everything was firmly fixed. And then, however lively the dancing may be, it is always graceful, and there is never a jerky or violent movement, which accounts for these elaborate head-dresses being as neat at the end as they are at the beginning.

Everything must finish some time, and presently the bridegroom, who had never come near the ladies since he and his wife entered the house, appeared at the entrance of the inner patio, his nose rather bluer than usual, and smelling strongly of smoke, to tell Carmencita that it was time to change her dress for the train.

"*Por Dios!*" exclaimed the girl, "I had quite forgotten that I was going away. Come, Pura; come, Lola, one more set of *seguidillas*: who knows when we shall dance together again!"

Sixteen-year-old Pura in her first mantilla, Lola with streaming hair and scanty petticoats little below her knees, and Carmencita with her two yards of train, made a very ill-assorted trio; but they did not concern themselves about the general effect. They danced no less than six *coplas* together, the last including some odd little jumps off the floor with both feet, quite the least graceful performance I had yet seen, and most inappropriate to a long train. And then, to a chorus of *Olé's* the three stopped dancing, flung their arms round each other, burst into floods of tears over the imminent parting, and were all borne away sobbing by their mother and various sympathetic friends.

The two younger sisters were still crying when they came downstairs an hour later with the bride in her travelling dress, a really charming arrangement of white muslin and blue ribbons, but Carmencita's face was almost hidden under an overwhelming straw hat covered with immense roses.

Now she was once more all smiles, and beamed impartially on everybody as she moved towards the great doors amid a perfect fusillade of explosive kisses. How they managed to reach her face under that hat I could not understand, but I heard her say several times, "*Cuidado con mi sombrero*" (Mind my hat), while she moved towards me; and as she embraced me I discovered why she was leaving her home smiling instead of in a flood of hysterical tears, as Spanish brides usually do.

"Isn't my hat enchanting?" she whispered in my ear; "you know it is the first hat I ever had in my life, and Cesar actually ordered it for me from Gibraltar! Isn't he an angel? And we are going to Madrid, and then to Paris, and he is going to buy me ever so many more! But don't tell anybody; I want to pretend I am quite accustomed to wearing a hat."

The fascinating novelty carried her through all the adieux and safe into the carriage with her bridegroom, and the last we saw of Carmencita was her laughing face as she straightened the monstrosity, which she had almost knocked off against the carriage door as she got in.

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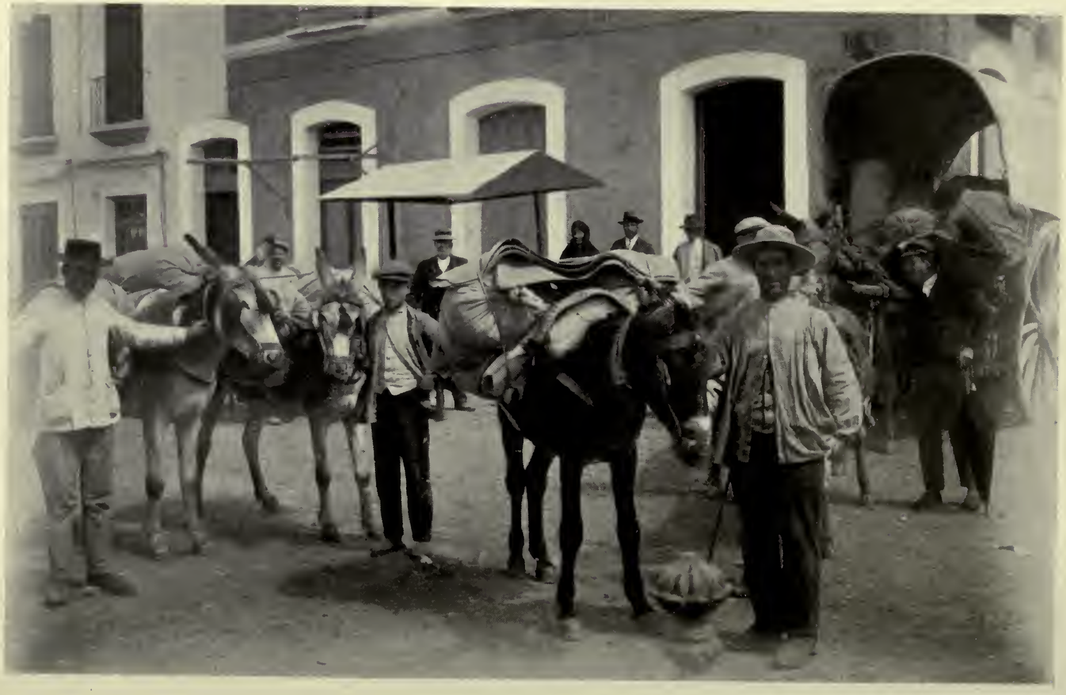

IN THE FLOUR MARKET.

CHAPTER IV

The "season of the baths"—Furnished apartments without beds—The amenities of the *Balneario*—Sea views at a discount—Bathing costumes: flounces and frills—The force of example—Happy swimmers.

THE "season of the baths," as the summer holidays are here called, is a very serious business indeed. In the fashionable seaside resorts such as San Sebastian, Santander, Malaga, etc., it is possible to get a comfortably furnished villa or flat for a few weeks, though only at a ruinous cost; but in the smaller places it was until lately difficult to get any accommodation at all outside of the *Balneario* or Hotel for Bathers, unless one took a so-called furnished house and sent the missing necessaries from one's own home by carrier or train; for the furnishing in such houses generally consisted mainly of more or less rickety chairs.

Personal luggage, of course, goes with the traveller, but things which do not come into that category, and they are many, must be booked and paid for separately. What exactly constitutes personal luggage varies a good deal with the taste and fancy of the booking-clerk. At one station, for instance, they flatly refused to take my *jamugas* (a folding donkey saddle described on p. 66), and at another an obliging porter tied them on to my suit-case and they went through without difficulty. But speaking generally, nothing but portmanteaus, bags, and such like are admitted, with one notable exception. About bedding there is never any trouble. A mattress for each member of the party, with its pillows, sheets, and blankets, will all go as personal luggage, though, as the limit of weight is only 60 lbs. per head, you may have to pay a considerable sum for excess. You can also book your bed and bedding (which it is just as well to take with you to a "furnished house" at any of the smaller seaside places) together with other immediate necessaries, by *grande vitesse*, when it is supposed to travel by the same train as yourself, and to be accessible immediately on arrival. But if there happens to be a crowd at the departure station, it is as likely as not that the things booked by *grande vitesse* will be left behind.

This happened to some Spanish acquaintances of mine one summer. They had booked everything except the children's lunch and such trifles as they could take in their hands, and they arrived at the village where they and we were to spend the holidays late at night and dead tired, without any luggage at all. The neighbours set to work and improvised beds for the smallest children, and the mothers, aunts, and sisters sat in rocking-chairs all night.

"What else is to be done?" they said philosophically; "this sort of thing always happens if you go to the baths in the fashionable season, when everybody wants to be there at once."

None of them were at all cross or depressed, although they were very grateful when we provided a mattress or two for the tired babies to be put to bed on.

Travellers who want to see the Spanish bathing season in full swing may put up at the *Balneario* with which every little seaside resort is provided. But they must be prepared to get no sleep or rest as long as they stay there, for the noise is inconceivable. There will be anything from fifty to two hundred men, women, and children—but chiefly children—of all ages, and all agog to make the most of the seven, fourteen, or twenty-one days of bathing prescribed by the family physician. For be it known that we don't bathe as we please in Spain, but under medical orders and strictly for the good of our health, and many people believe that all the virtue in salt water would be lost did they take one bath too many or too few. And from the moment they wake in the morning until the last frequenter of the hotel bar goes to bed some time in the small hours, the din of voices and the clatter of feet on the brick floors never ceases for one instant.

Most Spaniards have extraordinarily loud voices. Of course it is usual in any country to shout at a foreigner under the impression that he will understand better if you deafen him to begin with. But in Spain it is not only the foreigner who is bawled at, for Spaniards all shout at each other in the bosoms of their families to such a degree that when I first came to live here I got the impression that they were continually quarrelling. Men and women alike have this unpleasant habit, and although many of them are aware what a noise they make and remark that it is a bad custom, they seem constitutionally incapable of lowering their voices.

When I am almost driven crazy with the strain on my ears I pretend to be puzzled at what is said, and politely remark—

"I am stupidly ignorant of Castilian, but I shall understand better if you will kindly talk a little slower."

"Slower" (*mas despacito*) is a euphemism for "lower," and the request never fails to elicit a pleasant smile and a comment on the shrillness of Spanish voices, in a half whisper. But in two seconds habit holds sway again, and the din rises higher and higher until one feels that one's only refuge is flight unless one wishes to qualify for Bedlam.

The children of the well-to-do—unlike those of the poor—are quite undisciplined, and are allowed to shriek and scream as they please. Their noise does not worry their parents, who take it as a matter of course, and it never occurs to them that it can annoy any one else. When dozens of children of all ages are collected together in a *Balneario*, the racket is such as might have inspired Dante with an idea for a tenth circle in his hell. If you suggest that some white-faced, heavy-eyed creature of two or three years old would be better in bed than in the hall of an hotel blazing with electric light at ten or eleven at night, its parents merely reply "*No quiere*" (He doesn't want to), which is considered an entirely sufficient reason for letting their sickly infant sit up to all hours.

The children mostly dine at the table d'hôte of the *Balneario* in small towns, and when the endless meal is at last over some one begins to thump dance tunes on a cracked piano, and the little girls from six to fourteen swarm into the general sitting-room and start dancing. When midnight approaches and the children drop asleep from sheer weariness, filling the benches and flopping across their parents' knees, the grown-up young ladies and their attendant swains take the floor, and keep the fun going till 2 or 3 a.m. This is not one night but every night, and not in one *Balneario* but in every *Balneario*, throughout the month of August.

I once spent a day and a night in one of these hotels, which are often pretty and sometimes have beautiful sea views and other advantages which should make them really attractive out of the season, did they not all close as soon as it is over. For my sins I was at the *Balneario* of Our Lady of the Rosary in the height of the summer. I fled by the earliest train I could get next morning, and the landlord was most willing for me to go, for he had a married couple with three children ready to pack themselves into the tiny room I had engaged, which contained nothing in the way of furniture save a looking-glass, one chair, a small enamelled wash-basin, and one huge bed.

The last thing Spaniards seem to care about in the bathing season is the sea. The *Balneario* of Our Lady of the Rosary looked out right over the Atlantic, whose blue waves washed the foot of the low cliff on which the village stood. I never saw anything more lovely than the sunset over the sea the evening I was there, and the hotel dining-room opened on to a broad terrace supplied with numbers of chairs and tables at which people sat and sipped *refrescos*—a mild beverage consisting largely of sugar and water. Of all the people thus engaged I was the only one who turned to look at the sunset. And when after dinner I went out to the post office I found all the occupants of all the nice new houses built by themselves to live in during the brief bathing season, seated on uncomfortable chairs on the footway in the narrow, dirty street, and all with their backs to the sea. Their houses all had terraces running out to the edge of the water at high tide, like that of the *Balneario*, but as I strolled back to the hotel in the moonlight along the shore I noticed that there was not a single human being to be seen on any of these terraces. I had never imagined such a waste of opportunity, or such a strange idea of enjoying the sea. But I have been at a good many Spanish bathing-places since then, and have always been regarded as a harmless lunatic on account of my preference for sitting with my face to the sea instead of at my street door watching the passers-by.

The bathing at that village was excellent, the best, I think, that I have ever known, though a trifle dangerous for any but strong swimmers when a stormy day left a heavy roll and undertow. The *Balneario*, which had a monopoly of the bathing-houses for about half a mile of beach, provided a sufficiency of buoyed ropes, and a leaky old boat

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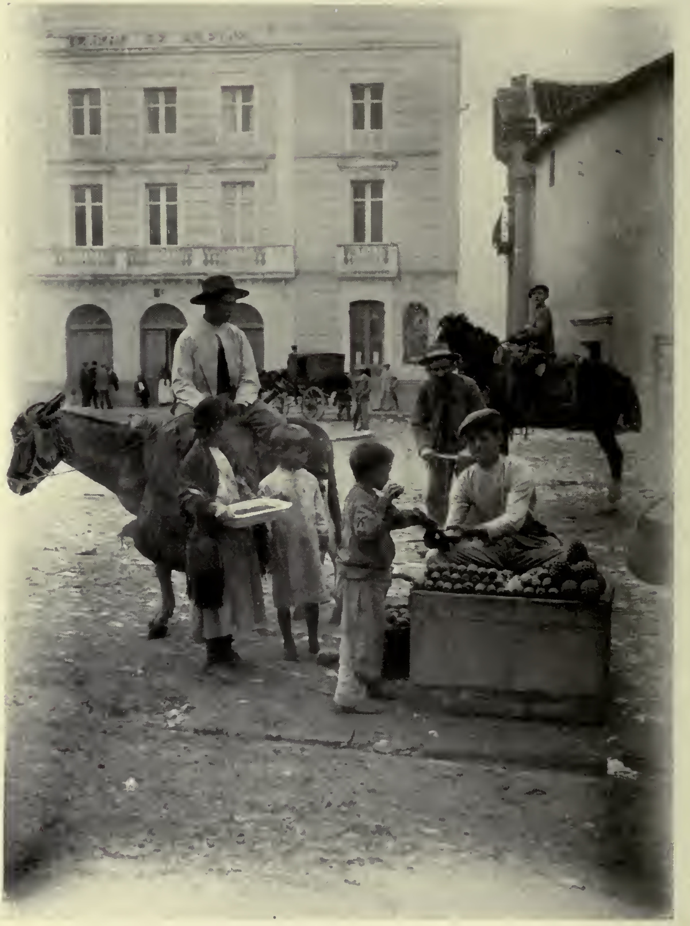

PINE CONES AND PRICKLY PEARS.

was anchored a hundred yards out all the summer in case of accidents. This boat was only accessible by swimming, there being no other anywhere within range, and it had no oars, so its precise use on an emergency does not appear. It filled and sank whenever the sea got up, but it was always dragged out, emptied, and replaced in position by the men in attendance, by the time the sea was calm enough for the visitors to bathe again.

Although we never stayed at the *Balneario*, we spent several summers in the village, where we took a little cottage and furnished it with what our Spanish friends thought very bad taste, for it contained plenty of books and tables and not a single pier-glass. Here we attracted a good deal of attention by sitting out at all hours, when the sun was not too blazing hot, under an awning rigged up on a sandhill facing the sea, where we watched with an amusement equal to their astonishment at our eccentricities, the amenities of Spanish families taking their baths.

The first year we were there the women all wore heavy serge gowns right down to their feet, mostly edged with a broad frill of the same material. Strange to say, one of them managed to swim, and to swim well, in this most unsuitable garment. Her husband, who was lame and could only walk with a stick, also swam well. He used to fling his stick ashore as soon as he was in the water to his waist, and he and his wife would swim out to the old boat, her flowing robe ballooning largely behind her. Later on we came to know them and their family, and the eldest son, a nice boy of about sixteen, told us as politely as he could how dreadfully shocked the Spanish ladies had been that first summer at our indelicate bathing garments, consisting of blouses with short sleeves, knickers, and a skirt to the knees. No doubt our by no means modern bathing dresses surprised them, although we had no idea of it at the time, for that year even the men wore long trousers, sometimes trimmed with little frills round the ankles, while coats covered their arms to the wrists. True, the men so attired did not attempt to swim, but bobbed up and down with their wives and daughters, all holding on to the rope for dear life and never moving an inch from where the bathing-man had put them, until he returned, when he thought they had been in long enough, with sheets to envelop the ladies and bring them to shore again.

Yes, all the ladies were carefully wrapped in sheets when they came out, although no human eye could discern the form so carefully hidden under their voluminous draperies. The only creatures who were allowed to expose any part of their anatomy to direct contact with the water were the babies. They, poor little miseries, were carried down stark naked to the water's edge and handed over to the bathing-men. These, no doubt with the best intentions, would take the screaming mite in one hand and dip it head first into a good big wave, using their free hand to disengage the frantic clutch of the terrified creatures when they came up in an agony of fright from their ducking and found themselves, choked and blinded by the salt water, turned upside down for a second dip. Three times was this brutality repeated every day, and if the piteous cries grew less the third time, the parents, watching the proceedings from the shore, would congratulate themselves that the child was beginning to enjoy his bath.

To me it seemed more likely that he was beginning to die from it, and indeed a summer rarely passes without at least one or two small children coming to an untimely end at the *Balnearios.* But nothing can convince the mothers that such treatment is too violent for babies. They themselves took their first sea baths under those conditions, and so did their parents before them, and therefore it must be the right thing and produce good results in the long-run, no matter how the little one may suffer in health and nerves at the moment.

Infant mortality is always high in Spain. In summer, I understand, it is higher than at any other time, and I do not wonder at it.

That first summer the lame Don Basilio and his wife were the only swimmers except ourselves. But the next year several schoolgirls begged him to teach them to swim, and as the season went on and they made progress in the new accomplishment the flowing skirts were exchanged for trousers, and the trousers gradually grew shorter until a reasonable amount of bare leg was displayed. One or two of the girls managed to swim out to the boat before their twenty-one baths came to an end, and indeed the mystic number was treated with un-

CHAPTER V

Travelling in Spain: four grades of trains but only one price—Ten miles an hour—Dangerous speed—Amusing the villagers—A slow night journey—Suppressing a raconteur—"Shall we go?"—Hot water while we wait—The paralytic—Taking a photograph—The beauty at the window—A discourteous custom—Empty minds—The toothpick—A gentleman of the old school—Hospitality at Antequera—A Spanish dinner table—Delightful memories.

TRAVELLING in this country is really a trial to the patience. It is true that the main lines have now been made comfortable, with corridor carriages, well-cushioned seats, and good lighting on the night trains; but the unpunctuality and the purposeless delays all along the line make even a short journey tiresome and a long one intolerable, unless one resolutely determines only to look at the comic side of things.

There are four classes of passenger trains, and we may take the journey from Madrid to Seville as typical of the rest. This line is used by the King, the Court, and the governing classes generally, and is travelled by nearly every tourist who comes to Spain, for every one wants to see Seville, Cordova, and Granada, while naturally the capital, with its superlative picture gallery, is the objective of all foreigners interested in art.

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AN ANCIENT GATEWAY.

The slowest of these trains is the *mixto*, a sort of cross between a passenger and a luggage train. The distance from Madrid to Seville is 358 miles, and the *mixto* does the journey in twenty-four hours and twenty minutes, or at the rate of nearly fifteen miles an hour, if it gets in punctually, which it seldom or never does. Next we have the *correo* or mail train, which nominally takes eighteen hours one way and nineteen the other—the more rapid journey being rather under twenty miles an hour. Then comes the *expreso*, which takes eleven and a half hours one way and twelve the other, travelling at the rate of about thirty miles an hour; and then the *expreso de lujo*, which does the journey in eleven hours and forty minutes, being a shade faster than the *expreso*. Both these last are *trains de luxe*, with dining-car and the wagon-lits Company's carriages, and are usually pretty punctual. These trains, be it remembered, are running on one of the chief main lines of Spain.

On the branch lines nothing like these speeds are attained. On one of these, as I was told by a friend who often had to travel by it, the usual rate was ten miles an hour, and the district petitioned the railway to reduce the speed, which was considered highly dangerous. The petition was refused, on the ground that if the train went any slower it would come too expensive, on account of the increased coal consumption.

With true Spanish inconsistency the same fares are charged for all these trains except the *trains de luxe*, for which an excess of ten per cent. is levied on the first-class fares. On these trains there is no second-class, and on one of them only a single third-class carriage. The *mixto* is horribly uncomfortable, and the carriages of all classes are usually dirty, but one need not fear any rudeness or roughness from one's fellow-travellers.

It was once my fate to travel by a *mixto* from a wayside station where I had missed the express after a long donkey ride across country. My men had never been there, but when it became evident that by no possibility could I catch the train I had intended, they declared, in their desire to reassure me, that there was a decent *posada* close to the station where I could comfortably spend the night. We arrived to find not even a cottage, but only a *choza* or hovel, built of stones and thatched with reeds, and a canteen consisting of the bar and a tiny room off it, where the railway people took their meals, for it was a junction of some importance, and several men were employed there. I had no alternative but to go on by the *mixto*, and I sat for seven mortal hours in that train, travelling in all eighty-four miles. It was about three in the morning when I reached a town which gave reasonable promise of possessing some sort of hotel, and at least half of that time we spent at stations, all lighted up and all crowded with villagers, just as if it were day.

I am bound to say that although the seats were so hard and so grimy, and the jolting of the train so incessant that sleep was impossible, I neither heard nor saw anything offensive, although my fellow-travellers were all men, and there was not one gentleman, in the conventional sense of the term, among the lot. One man, it is true, began a funny story which it was probably just as well that I did not understand, but before he came to the point his friends hushed him up, on the ground that they had heard it all before, whereupon the facetious person so promptly dropped asleep that I guessed he had been looking too long on the wine-cup before he started. Nothing was said to me, but I quite understood that the raconteur was silenced out of consideration for my presence.

The *correo* on the main lines is much better than the *mixto*; the first and second class even have corridor carriages, and these are roomy and comfortably cushioned. If time were absolutely no object—as indeed seems to be the case in Spain—one need not complain of the *correo* at all. But to people who prefer getting to their journey's end to sitting in the train, the endless delays and the purposeless dawdling are intensely irritating. The train stops at every little station, apparently to amuse the villagers, for often no one gets either in or out, though there will be from twenty to a hundred loafers on the platform. After long waiting a guard is heard to inquire, "Shall we go?" (*Vamonos?*); some other official says, "Let's go!" (*Vamonos!*); a third rings a bell and shouts, "My lords the travellers to the train!" (*Señores viajeros, al tren!*); some one blows a horn, the engine whistles two or three times, and we drift out as vaguely as we drifted in, ten, twenty, or thirty minutes before.

At one station on a very dull journey which I often have occasion to make, an extra delay seems to have been arranged to enable the wives of the stationmaster, the canteen keeper, and the one porter to obtain a supply of hot water from the engine boiler, for every time I travel that way I see a group of these ladies filling cans and buckets from a steaming jet which certainly is not let off anywhere else.

At another station we spend an interminable time watering the engine. This station is only half an hour from a junction where the train waits, according to schedule, for thirty minutes, and why the water cannot be taken in then, the demon of dilatoriness that presides over Spanish railways alone knows. This, like the distribution of hot water, does not occur only once in a way. I have been over the line eight times, for my sins, and have seen the same incidents every time.

Once our train waited an extra ten minutes while a poor paralysed old woman was conveyed in front of the engine from a train alongside of ours to the exit from the station, where a donkey awaited her. The porter carried her slung over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes, head downwards. We all thought she was dead until we saw her hands waving and heard her shrill voice bidding the man shift her into an easier position, which he did, by no means unkindly. She was a very poor woman, and her old husband trudged after her, bearing a couple of worn pillows and a bag of food. It was clear that there was no money wherewith to tip that porter. No one grumbled at the time lost by our train, which was already close on an hour late, although she might just as well have been carried behind it and thus let us go on. They only said, "Poor creature! She seems very ill." On the other hand, no one thought of producing pesetas or even coppers to alleviate her sufferings, though probably if I had been ready-witted enough to suggest it, most of my travelling companions would have contributed. Spaniards are curiously destitute of imagination in such cases, but when I have had the presence of mind to propose some such obvious charity as the above they have quickly followed suit, expressing admiration of our English initiative.

The funniest example of official indifference to the time table that I have seen occurred on a journey from Algeciras to Bobadilla. During a long pause at a wayside station one of our party got out to photograph a group of picturesque beggars—for on the Andalucian railways beggars are chartered libertines, permitted to climb up to the windows and pester the travellers for money. Before he had finished the bell rang for the train to start, but seeing how he was engaged the stationmaster politely turned to the guard.

"Wait a moment longer," he said; "do you not see that the gentleman is taking a photograph?"

Let it not be supposed, however, that Spanish travellers find their slow trains such a trial as we do. The men chat, smoke, eat, drink, and sleep, and the women eat and sleep—the elder ones, that is. The younger ones spend most of their time standing at the window. This is a very favourite occupation of all Spanish travellers in first-class compartments. Directly the train slows into a station every window of the corridor carriage will be occupied by a more or less portly person of either sex, who thrust their heads and bodies out as far as they will go, to stare up and down at the exceedingly uninteresting crowd assembled to see the train come in. Except on Sundays and holidays, when the station is to the village what the fashionable promenade is to the town, the people who loaf on the platform are by no means the pick of the population, being merely those who have nothing else to do. But this does not seem to diminish the Spanish traveller's interest in them, and he will block the windows till the very last minute, watching the village idiot or the diseased beggar until he is quite out of sight, as if all his hopes of happiness depended on getting the very last glimpse of the unpleasing spectacle.

The girls who travel have, it must be admitted, another object in planting themselves at the window while the train is in a station. They want not so much to see as to be seen, and *faute de mieux*, the open admiration of the village loafer helps to pass the time. On one occasion I travelled for many hours in company with the wife and daughter of a man whose office under the Government argued a good social position and a certain amount of cultivation. The mother talked of nothing but the excellence of the food in the town we had both been visiting, and the girl never spoke at all save to ask me at intervals where we were and how much behind time the train was now. At every station she planted herself in the window, and as she was strikingly handsome with unusually brilliant colouring, a group of yokels never failed to collect in front of our compartment, staring at her for all they were worth.

"I cannot imagine," the mother once remarked to me, "why so many people stand there."

"Well," I said with perfect sincerity, "they probably do not often have any one so pretty as your daughter to look at."

The mother bridled and smiled, and immediately told the girl what I had said.

After that our young beauty never left the window at all—presumably lest some admirer should miss the opportunity of gazing on her charms—from the moment the train drew into any station until it left again; and I calculated afterwards that she had stood three solid hours on end in the corridor, only varying her position to move to my window at the opposite end of the compartment when we stopped at a station where the platform was on that side.

This discourteous habit, common to men and women alike, of blocking the first-class carriage windows regardless of the comfort and convenience of the other passengers, is in some ways the most unpleasant feature of travelling in Spain. It is practically confined, however, to the well-to-do, and I am bound to say that on short journeys, where a little fatigue does not matter, I often prefer to travel second or even third class, so that I may get my fair share of the view and the air, which is impossible when travelling with Spaniards who can afford to pay the higher fares. On the other hand, as they seem quite unable to amuse themselves in other ways (for very few of them ever read in the train, or indeed in their own houses), perhaps one ought not to grudge them the delightful distraction and the wide enlightenment to be obtained by looking out of the carriage window.

In other ways many little courtesies are shown. Food, for instance, is always offered, even though you are at the moment unpacking your own lunch basket. This is as a rule a form, which means no more than the offer of his house, at such a number of such a street, which your travelling acquaintance will make you when he gets out at his station, well knowing that you and he will never meet again in this world. But sometimes the offer to share with you is quite genuine, as in the case of a stout Catalan commis-voyageur, who, after I had politely declined three times over to divide his lunch, having just finished my own before his eyes, took two elegant celluloid toothpicks out of his pocket, and laid one upon my knee, saying, "That at least you will accept!"

He afterwards told me that he "travelled" for a German firm which made celluloid ornaments, and I always regret that I returned his toothpick without reading the advertisement printed on it. I thought he might want it, and I knew I did not, but I believe he really did wish me to accept his gift—and take a note of his firm.

When one has the luck to make the acquaintance of a Spanish gentleman of the old school, one realises what a loss is inflicted on society by his retirement from the world, for men of his kind dislike the new aristocracy of wealth, and shrink from competing with the *cursileria* of the large towns as much as Don Quixote himself would have done.

On my way to Granada one lovely May day I had the rare good luck to travel with one of these gentlemen. I was accompanied by an old friend whom I had not seen for many years, and we congratulated ourselves on finding an empty compartment when we got into the train. Just before we started, however, a slim well-dressed man of forty or so clambered up the precipitous steps into the carriage, with a pot of carnations under each arm. This alone would have prepossessed one in his favour, for the male Spaniard of any class above the labourer usually thinks it degrading to be seen carrying anything in his hands, and leaves the parcels to be borne by his wife if there is no servant handy. Our man not only carried his own carnations, but was a great deal more careful of them than of his smart personal luggage, and finally, after asking permission, he wedged them up in the rack between his valise and mine, explaining that he had bought them at the last moment to take to his wife, and was anxious that they should come to no harm.

The ice thus broken, we soon got into conversation, and when he found that we were going to stop the night at Antequera he seemed quite delighted.

"That is my own town," he said, "I can assure you that it is worth a visit, and I wish more foreigners knew how beautiful is the situation, and how many objects of interest it contains. There is also a quite passable hotel, and the people of Antequera have good manners, and do not worry tourists in the streets, although they see comparatively few English ladies, or—what is even of greater interest to them—English ladies' hats."

Most unluckily, he said, he would only be at home himself for quite a few hours, as he had to go on to Malaga early next morning, but he was deeply interested in archæology, and on finding that my tastes lay in that direction, he said that, no matter what business he had to set aside, he must have the pleasure of showing me some very curious capitals of columns, recently unearthed from a fourteenth-century convent wall, the period of which he found himself unable to determine. I accepted the invitation with delight, for not only did I know by experience that great interest often attaches to objects "found in the convent walls," but I knew it was the chance of a lifetime for my friend to see the interior of a Spanish gentleman's country house.

Having fixed the hour for our call and given us his address, our friend proceeded to spread his belongings over three seats, for we were approaching a junction, and he explained that he did not mean anyone else to get in, as he had slept badly overnight and wanted a good nap.

The station was crowded and many people came and looked into our compartment, shook their heads at the much-engaged seats, and went off to stow themselves in the packed compartments elsewhere. Our friend smiled pleasantly, showing beautiful white teeth under a short fair moustache—for he was as blond as a Dane, with brown hair and blue eyes—and suggested that the stationmaster should put on another carriage when an insistent lady with several children tried, in vain, to force her way in against his polite resistance.

And when we were safe out of the station he pulled out his three seats to form a sofa, as is done when these compartments are converted into sleeping carriages at night, and calmly slumbered until we got to Bobadilla some three hours later. This is the Clapham Junction of southern Spain, and it was impossible for our fellow-traveller, for all his fine manners and general grand air, to appropriate our whole compartment any longer; but, as he remarked, he had had his sleep and now no longer required the extra seats. So other travellers were welcome to come in, and the more so because we should all three be getting out at the next station but one.

"You will require half an hour to secure your rooms at the hotel, and half an hour to rest," he said as we parted, we in one omnibus and he in another, with many apologies for not being able to offer us his carriage, because his return was unexpected, and no one had come to meet him. "But I hope you will be able to reach my house conveniently by six o'clock, that I may present my wife and children to you, and show you my capitals in a good light."

He had, of course, given us his card, but the name told us nothing except that he was not a man of title. So in the omnibus we took the opportunity of obtaining a little information about him. We found he was the Alcalde, or Mayor, which means that he was little short of a king in the town, for the Alcalde here holds a position social, political, and municipal, considerably higher than that of any Lord Mayor in England. In fact we have at home no authority with which the Spanish Alcalde can be compared, for he is appointed by the Government, and can make and unmake at will any of the numerous paid officials under him. Alcaldes therefore generally have as many enemies as friends during their term of office, but our Alcalde of Antequera seemed to have gained the affections of his townspeople, not by political favouritism, but by his personal qualities.

"He is the richest and the best man in the town," said the respectable tradesman with whom we talked in the omnibus; "and I should not say that if it was not true, for he is a Conservative and I am a Liberal, and I lost my job at the Town Hall when they made him Alcalde, so I've kept a sharp look out for any mistakes he might make."

At six o'clock, according to promise, we made our way to the Alcalde's house, and were ushered by a smiling servant, evidently on the look out for us, across a patio blazing with geraniums and heavy with the scent of roses, heliotrope, and jessamine, through a long shady gallery with fine eighteenth-century furniture ranged along the walls, into a charming little reception-room, furnished with light-painted wood, and adorned with the usual window blinds, chair-backs, and table-covers of exquisite needlework, edged and inset with fine lace and embroidery.

To us here appeared our Alcalde leading his handsome wife and followed by his two good-looking children. We were a little late, and he apologised for the family being at dinner; but if we would come into the dining-room and "accompany" them at their meal, without ceremony and as friends, he and the Señora would soon have done eating and be ready to take us round their—and our—house and show us any little object of interest which might repay us for the trouble of looking at it.

Of course we agreed, while apologising for our unpunctuality, and regretting the disturbance we were causing in the family.

But when we entered the large and well-furnished dining-room, we found that the whole thing had been planned by our hospitable acquaintance in order to induce us to dine with him; for places had been laid for us and they had not even begun their dinner. So we had no alternative but to sit down and accept the admirably cooked dishes that were set before us, or feel that by not eating with the family we were compelling our friends to swallow their food in haste while they kept us uncomfortably waiting.

The table was well furnished with good silver and glass, and china bearing the Alcalde's arms. A vase of choice roses stood in the centre, and family portraits hung round the walls. We really might have been at an English dinner party, save for the unceremonious attendance of women servants with silk kerchiefs on their shoulders and flowers in their hair, who casually strolled in and out with large dishes, which they always offered first to their master, then to their mistress, and afterwards to the guests. This is etiquette in old Spain, dating from the times when the food might perhaps be poisoned, and the host helped himself first to show that it could safely be eaten.

The dishes too, though tempting and well-cooked, were somewhat different from ours. First came a white soup thickened with vermicelli and having a strong flavour of fowl. Then a dish of *frituras*, a mass of milk sauce thickened with flour and minced ham, allowed to cool, then shaped into the form of pears, rolled in fine bread-crumbs, and fried with a skill which makes a dish of this kind one of the most appetising in the Spanish menu. Then came cold boiled fish, fresh from Malaga, served with a sauce made of yolk of egg and oil, and garnished with raw tomatoes, raw onions, and green and red *pimientos*, a kind of capsicum without any heat. A fowl followed, whose lack of flavour showed that it had been boiled in the soup; then the inevitable *puchero* or *cocido*, also boiled in the soup, and consisting of *garbanzos*, ham, bacon fat, beef, haricot beans, and the stems of an edible thistle. Then an excellent concoction of custard with tiny meringues floating on the top. After this, biscuits, fruit, quince cheese, fresh goat-milk cheese, and various sweetmeats. Red and white wine were on the table, and last of all came a cup of capital black coffee. This was the every-day fare of the Alcalde's family, but not of the

Alcalde. He told us that his stomach was delicate, and took nothing but a couple of poached eggs and a glass of hot milk—which amply accounted for his elegant slenderness, so unlike the enormous obesity that afflicts most Spaniards of his wealth and position after twenty years or so of the feeding above described.

What was most noteworthy in his house, however, was the daintiness and luxury of the dining-room appointments, for it is not unusual to find, even in the homes of well-to-do people, only just enough knives, forks, and plates to go round once, while flowers on the table or anywhere else in the house are unheard of. Perhaps the excessive scantiness of the cutlery and crockery have much to say to the absence of those invitations to lunch and dinner which are the current social coin with us. The idea that a pretty and well-found table adds to the comfort and refinement of life at home never seems to have occurred to the mass of middle-class Spain; and of course where the family share a tumbler and eat three or four courses off the same plate, a visitor at meals is not likely to be welcome.

No doubt there are many people in the position of our Alcalde who live as elegantly as he does, but it is a great exception to find oneself invited to take one's place as a guest at their table; and his hospitality, the beauty of the town, the glorious mountain views all round, the wealth of wild flowers on the hills, and the many remains of ancient buildings, all combined to mark Antequera with a white stone in my friend's and my memories.

We see now that, although the "offer of the house" on the part of a travelling acquaintance has become in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred degraded into the merest empty compliment, the root whence grew this flower of a fine courtesy thrives in the soil to which it is native. For there are still Spanish gentlemen whose hospitality is as graceful as it is instinctive, and who, when they tell you that at such-and-such a number of such-and-such a street "you have your house and a friend," really hope and expect that if occasion offers you will take them at their word and accept their frank invitations.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

IN THE KEEP OF ARCOS CASTLE.

PART II.—AUTUMN

CHAPTER VI

A saddle for femininity—September fairs—Three kinds of hostelries—A night at the street door—*Buñolitos*—Mosquitoes and holy water—All the fun of the fair—The etiquette of mendicancy—A Spanish circus—A cinematograph—Drunk but still courteous—The diligence.

THERE are three perfect months for exploring the mountains and visiting remote hills, valleys, and villages in the leisurely way only to be done on horse, mule, or donkey back. One is April, but then one ought to be in Seville for the most typical fair in Western Europe; another is May, but then one must be in Granada for the nightingales and the roses which make the Alhambra a dream of delight; the third is September, when grapes, peaches, and melons are in their prime, when the weather though brilliantly sunny is no longer oppressively hot, and the high roads are gay with swarming herds of creatures moving from fair to fair, and forming with their owners a series of living pictures which make the longest journey enjoyable.

For a woman no longer young, a donkey with *jamugas* and a pack mule is the ideal mode of transit over the mountains. If you possess your own *jamugas*, as I do, with the leathern straps that support them on three sides fitted to your measure, there is no more comfortable riding seat. But perhaps I ought to explain what the *jamugas* consist of, for they are rarely seen nowadays except in mountain towns, and unless seen are not easily imagined.

According to the dictionary of the Spanish Academy the word is derived from the Basque *zamucac*, "a seat intended for femininity to mount on any kind of beast of burden." But although the name may have been originally Basque, the apparatus is Oriental, for one sees just the same sort of thing in Morocco and in the East, only there it is hooded to hide all the femininity from curious eyes.

The basis is simply a folding trestle, like that for a table, with cross-straps to prevent the trestle from opening too wide. This is placed on the *aparejo* of the beast of burden, the *aparejo* being a stout pad of straw used to prevent the *jamugas* or the panniers, as the case may be, from galling the animal's back. It is fixed firmly with innumerable twists and turns of tightly knotted cord, and a folded blanket is laid across the donkey's back to make your seat soft. As a matter of fact you generally feel the cord through the blanket, but to obviate this you can use a pillow, which is supplied if desired with the donkey, pillow-case and all. For the information of my fellow-femininity I may add that I personally take a cushion of my own to sit upon, and have the pillow tied to the strap which forms the back of the *jamugas*, and thus save myself from jolts and jars on rough ground, no small advantage on a long journey. Between the blanket and the cushion a gaily coloured cotton cloth covers the *aparejo* and most of the donkey, and streams out behind and around when you meet the wind. The oldest and most delicate femininity can ride in this arm-chair, for it amounts to that, and I have travelled all day long on my *jamugas* up hill and down dale, and my sure-footed little donkey has never tripped or turned a hair.

It is slow progress, certainly, but what of that, when at every fresh step fresh beauty is revealed, and all your way your guide, as he leads the sumpter mule with your inappropriate modern "grip" or suit-case in its panniers, entertains you with his discourse, or wakes the echoes with his song, for he sings most of the way, "to bring good luck."

The worst of it is that nowadays one has to go a long way by rail and road before one reaches country remote enough for *jamugas*: one is lucky if half a charming tour can be covered on a donkey. Such was my fortune one sunny September, and I never felt more sorry than when I had to come back to the railway after a fortnight spent on the hills. But the first part of the journey was not without incident, as I will now relate.

I left the train at Jerez, the sherry city with its huge bodegas full of valuable wine, its cosmopolitan hotel, and its numerous millionaires. From there to Arcos, thirty kilometres distant along a mountain road continually increasing in beauty, a motor bus takes one in about two hours. Arcos is a town of 20,000 inhabitants, perched on the steepest of hills, with a Tartessian-Roman-Arabic castle on the very top, altered and restored like many others in this country by the great Dukes of Arcos, who in the fifteenth century were the rivals in wealth and political power of the Medina Sidonia family.

From an Arabic loggia, here called *mirador*, which means literally "view place," we obtain a marvellous panorama of the mountains, with a bird's-eye view of a fertile valley in the foreground, encircled by the winding Guadalete. It is truly a bird's-eye view, for the *vega*, as the cultivated valley is called, lies fully five hundred feet below the sheer cliff on which the castle stands, and people walking on it look about six inches high. The cliff is so steep that in many places even the ubiquitous cactus cannot take hold, and here vultures and eagles build their nests in security, for no little boy can throw stones anywhere near them. Even the goats can only clamber up a little way at the base, where the detritus of ages has formed a sharply sloping rise extending fifty or sixty feet up from the river and the new high road which leads from Arcos to El Bosque. That view alone is worth a stop at Arcos, but it is by no means the only "sight," for the ancient town is full of Roman, Arabic, and Renaissance remains, and the fourteenth-century mother church contains a wonderful gold chalice given by one of the ducal family when the church was built—a relic which no one interested in goldsmith's work should miss. This church, which the people call their cathedral, overlooks a square at the foot of the castle, and that square in May is a mass of golden mimosa. I have never seen such a glow of colour or smelt such overpowering sweetness from trees of that kind.

Part of the castle was granted to the Town Council for their hall in the sixteenth century, and in one of the rooms, which was the chapel of the Dukes of Arcos, are preserved no less than eleven grants to the city bearing the signature of Alfonso the Learned, who won it from the Almohad Moors in 1284 with the help of his ally Al Ahmar, the Arab king of Granada.

The Dukes of Arcos held sway here for over two hundred years, until all memory of the friendship of Alfonso and his father St. Ferdinand with the Moslems of Granada was forgotten in the ambition of the "Catholic Kings," Ferdinand and Isabella, to make a united kingdom of Spain. Then, when Andalucia was all a-fire with ruthless war, Arcos fell on evil days, for lying as she does on the frontier of the kingdom of Granada (hence her full name, which is Arcos de la Frontera), the Moslems naturally seized the opportunity to try again and again to recover this strong outpost of their former dominion. Until nearly the end of the war the castle held out, but in 1484 the Moslems possessed themselves of the city, and the Duchess, who was defending the castle, was so hard pressed that surrender seemed inevitable. The Duke was away besieging Alhama by the Queen's orders, and although the Duchess contrived to send a message to her husband telling him of her straits, Isabella could not spare him and his troops even to rescue his wife.

The only knight who could help was the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who was known to be somewhere in the district, on his way from Seville with reinforcements for the Queen. But Medina Sidonia and Arcos had been at daggers-drawn for generations. It was almost as bitter and prolonged a feud as that of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and none of the Arcos faction dreamed of appealing to Medina Sidonia for help.

Medina Sidonia, however, was a very chivalrous gentleman. The tidings of the lady's plight reached him as he lay before Setenil (so called, according to local etymology, because the Romans besieged it seven times—*septem* = *sete*—and took nothing—*nil* !) some twenty miles from Arcos. He turned back at once with half of his troops, drove the Moslems out of the town, left a strong guard with the rescued lady, and then returned to continue the siege of the still stronger fortress of Setenil, and to play his part in the taking of Alhama.

If Medina Sidonia had not brought the feud between the two families thus dramatically to an end Arcos would have had to capitulate, as its neighbour Zahara had already done, and once the Moslems had recovered the four strategic points, Arcos, Zahara, Setenil, and Ronda, the war against Granada might have had a different ending.

We do not find this story in the published histories of Ferdinand and Isabella, but it is written in the archives of the city of Arcos and in those of the Arcos family, now, alas! mouldering in a locked room in one of the great towers of the castle, which is falling to ruin because its owners cannot afford to keep it up.

With regret I tore myself away from the castle, whose once warlike keep is now a garden of roses, orange trees, jessamine, and geraniums grown into bushes with age. But I had to get on to Bornos and Villamartín on the way to Algodonales, where I was to change the diligence for the donkey.

Of that stage of the road the less said the better. Much of it was dull, all of it was dusty, and the diligence was packed to its utmost capacity, for it was the eve of the Villamartín September Fair, and the rattling old shandridan, built to carry eight or ten passengers in all, had five horses instead of three, and no less than twenty-seven people were stowed inside, on the box, and on the roof. Every one declared that it was excessively dangerous, and made a great joke of the fact; and as Spanish drivers make a point of whipping up their horses when they near the bottom of a hill, in order to take the next rise on the run, and the over-loaded machine rocked like a ship in a storm on every such occasion, it was little short of a miracle that we arrived at Villamartín alive.

Arrive we did, however, and at once found ourselves in all the fun of the fair.

The only *fonda* in the place looked out on the main square. The polite name for *fonda* (the Arabic *fondak*) in English is hotel, and the *fonda* professes to provide food and beds for its customers; unlike the *parador* (stopping-place), which only gives beds to travellers providing their own food, and the *posada* (rest-house), which is really little more than a stable for animals with some sort of shelter attached for the people who belong to them. Our Villamartín "hotel" only had three or four bedrooms and no sitting-room at all, the food being served in a passage through which one passed from the street to the staircase, or one might rather say step-ladder, leading up to an open gallery containing one of the convenient and comfortable folding bedsteads called *catres*, minus a mattress; one broken-backed chair, and nothing else. From this a narrow door led into a tiny bedroom which just held a bed and a washstand.

We had no choice but to stay here. The humble Spanish friends with whom I was travelling to their home at Algodonales—a mother and son—insisted on my taking the bedroom, although they gladly accepted my invitation to share the washstand. The mother said she could sleep on the *catre* with a pillow from my bed, and the boy on the floor alongside, with his head on my travelling-bag. Every other corner in the house was full for the fair, and even this modest accommodation could only be had for one night. Poor as it was, the bedding and the linen were clean, and we thought ourselves lucky to get a room at all.

But we rashly arranged a pillow and rug for Rosario on the *catre* before going out to see the town, and when we got back, the *catre*, the pillow, and even the broken-backed chair had been carried off for another customer, and my poor friends had just to sit downstairs at the street door and amuse themselves as best they could till it was time to start. This, however, was not quite the hardship it sounds, for all Spaniards love to turn night into day; and their main concern was lest I should be uncomfortable.

We were to start by diligence for Algodonales, our final destination, at 3 a.m., and pretty Rosario had agreed to let me sleep till two—if I could, which seemed doubtful in view of the incessant noise in the main street on which my tiny window looked. I did sleep, notwithstanding the noise, and woke to find the sun streaming in, and the town alive with goatherds and their flocks, donkeys loaded with fruit and vegetables, women with baskets of eggs and live fowls tied together by the legs and distressfully clucking, and a continual stream of ponies, mules, cows, calves, pigs, sheep, and oxen coming in from the country to the fair; while all along the footwalks little canvas-covered sweet-stalls had sprung up like mushrooms in the night. I had slept through all the riot of the small hours, and the diligence had either not gone at 3 a.m. or had gone without me.

I sprang up and opened my door, wondering if Rosario had also overslept the appointed hour. There she was with a cup of coffee for me, smiling as brightly as ever, but her curly hair was ruffled and she had a generally dishevelled appearance. The diligence had not gone. Something was wrong with the wheels, or the harness, or the horses, or the driver, no one knew exactly what; but Rosario thought that the truth was probably that the driver wanted to do some business in the fair. Anyhow the diligence did not start, and Rosario and her boy had sat all night long in their chairs, with various other visitors to the town, who like themselves could get no beds.

Relieved of their anxiety lest I should be vexed at the delay, the mother and son quickly brightened up, and we agreed that as we had to stay there all day we would get all the fun we could out of it. Rosario after a wash and a brush in my room looked as fresh as if she had slept in her own comfortable bed, and as for the boy, he was at an age to enjoy anything.

The innkeeper flatly declined to provide us with coffee or anything else for breakfast, so we went out and ate *buñolitos*, a peculiar dainty largely in evidence at these country fairs, where booths are set up entirely for their sale. My friends took me to the largest and gayest of the two tents already opened, which had white muslin curtains tied together in the middle with streamers of red and yellow calico, just like the sweet-stalls in Syria. An overpowering smell of boiling oil greeted our nostrils as we approached, and such was the frizzling and the smoke that we could hardly see the *buñolera*, a stout lady in a brown skirt, white apron, and blue cross-over, with a red handkerchief picturesquely knotted round her head. She saw us, however, and promptly turned to serve us with the odd product of her cooking—a mixture of flour and water squeezed through a funnel into a vast frying-pan and coiled round and round as it fried, until the whole was deftly thrown out unbroken on the dish. *Buñolitos* are crisp and tempting and really delicious to eat, provided only that the oil be good and of last year's milling; for the new oil has an abominable smell and taste which only a native can endure.

This was good oil, and the *buñolera* was an artist. We ate all we could, and be it observed that I fell little short of my companions in the quantity consumed. We paid a penny a piece for our breakfast, and then strolled up the hill to the Parish Church, for it was Sunday and a festival Mass was in progress.

Very few people were present. A couple of nuns, a few ladies shrouded in black gauze veils falling over their shoulders and down to their knees, —a graceful Oriental survival which lends dignity to the stoutest old dowager,—two or three peasants with handkerchiefs on their heads, and the usual group of beggars about the door.

I got past these last without trouble by using the accepted formulas, "Pardon me, brother, for God's sake," or "May God support you"; both of which mean that one consigns them to the mercy of Providence because one has no mercy of one's own for them. And if this seems rather hard-hearted, let me point out that in remote places, where foreigners are never seen from one year's end to another, the gift of a penny to a single beggar will be a sowing of the dragon's teeth to raise up as by magic a swarm of from twenty to fifty more, who pursue one with pitiful appeals that change to imprecations and even stone-throwing, unless one proceeds to dole out pennies all round. One may therefore be thankful that the ceremonious response above quoted seldom fails of its effect, it being a matter of etiquette in Spanish mendicant circles politely to accept the time-worn courtesy in lieu of coin of the realm. It has often acted like a charm in my own experience, and I can call to mind brutal-looking men with some affliction or other which by no means hampered their physical power for violence, who stopped short and turned away with a gentle "Go with God" instead of a rude retort, when I answered their petitions with *Perdóneme, hermano.*

The Mass ended a few minutes after we went in, and as I stood by the main door studying the not very interesting architecture of the church, I suddenly felt a wet finger on my forehead. It was one of the nuns, who, noticing that I had failed to cross myself with holy water, was doing it for me. I appreciated her good intention, but did not appreciate that particular holy water, for the marble vessel was alive with mosquito grubs, whose progenitors swarmed round us where we stood. I knew the holy water was seldom changed in these country churches, but never had I seen any quite so dirty as that.

A clamour of brass instruments drew us out. It was the town band making a round of the chief streets to announce that the fair had begun. It was a much better band than we should find in many English country towns of a similar size, and indeed the level of the brass bands is rather high here—a fact I cannot explain, for among amateurs one practically never hears any concerted music at all, and even when two performers sing together on the stage in the minor theatres, it is as often as not in unison. This band had already woke the town on its first round at 6 a.m., when the church bells were ringing for early Mass, and now as soon as its performance came to an end, a sort of blaring roar from a merry-go-round began and continued at intervals throughout the rest of the day. I had never imagined, far less heard, anything like the noise of that fair in the daytime; but worse was reserved for the night.

Many hours were yet to pass, however, before night fell, and I must say they did not hang heavily, for the people and their animals formed a series of moving pictures which it would need the brush of a Sorolla or a Zuloaga to do justice to. One especially took my fancy. Two pretty girls (and the mountain people are as a rule remarkably handsome), dressed in beautifully laundered print gowns with flowers in their sleek black hair, rode together on a white horse covered with the brilliantly embroidered trappings familiar to us in pictures of the last century and still in common use in the Sierras. One girl sat facing one way and the other the other, with their arms round each other's waists, and a slim lad in a round Cordovese hat, a brown velvet jacket, and richly embroidered leather overalls,[1] led the horse by a purple-and-white halter made of twisted aloe fibre. On a donkey alongside were slung the girls' worldly goods, consisting of a box almost as large as the donkey, brilliantly yellow with new paint that gleamed golden in the morning sun, balanced by a large bundle tied up in a crimson wrapper, and topped by a sheaf of pale maize stalks, which would be the donkey's provender during the fair. It was a riot of youth and beauty and colour and gaiety which would have been the chance of a lifetime for a painter, but sad to say no painter was there to immortalise the scene.

In the afternoon we went to see a circus in the Bull Ring, and in company with the rank and fashion of the town we paid one peseta apiece for what was described on the programme as a "stall." The "stalls" were honest reed-seated chairs, such as are sold new for two pesetas, but were borrowed on this occasion from the kindly neighbours and brought in by half-dozens at a time, as the aristocratic part of the audience increased.

The show was advertised for five o'clock, but did not begin till about six, by which time the shady side of the ring was crowded, and the stalls had almost surrounded the very small circle railed in and sanded for the performers. We first had a tumbler with a week's beard, dressed in crimson satin and red cotton stockings, who usually came to grief in his feats, but never failed to draw applause. Followed a highly coloured young lady whom we had seen at the door taking tickets, and who now juggled with knives and cubes of wood, which invariably landed on the ground instead of on the table; a clown, in the same crimson satin and red cotton stockings, who played the fiddle quite nicely, but was interrupted by another clown with a feather brush, who always stopped the music by tickling the violinist's nose at the third or fourth bar, to the intense delight of the audience; and then another highly rouged lady, past her first youth, who exhibited three rather sad little performing dogs.

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[1] These garments, which are commonly worn by the peasants, are merely a kind of divided apron of leather, covering the front of the body from the waist to the feet.

An acrobat, again in the crimson satin and red cotton stockings, now came on, after great preparations and testing of wires, to perform a trapeze act. There seemed to be some sort of hitch about starting, which was explained when the acrobat with a sweet smile indicated that we had been seated by the attendants immediately under his taking-off platform, as indeed we were, unknown to ourselves. So we and our immediate neighbours picked up our chairs and retired, while the acrobat did some rather pretty swinging.

The unshaven tumbler then reappeared, now dressed in a pilot coat and brown trousers, but still unshaven, and we discovered that what the advertisements called an "automovil race" was about to take place. It was in fact a terribly gimcrack "loop-the-loop" affair, and the performer looked haggard with nervousness as he examined his wires and pulleys.

In retiring from the trapeze we had unconsciously planted ourselves just where the "automovil" must inevitably smash into us all; no attempt having been made to indicate a danger zone. No one waited to be asked to retire this time. As soon as we saw the bold chauffeur climb his scaffold and realised what was going to happen, we just got up and bolted like rabbits, all quite as frightened as the chauffeur looked. We did not, however, omit to carry our chairs with us. The band struck up an inappropriate gipsy dance, the performer whirled down, and we settled into our seats with a sigh of relief that he and we had escaped with our lives.

But even this was not the last time we were moved on, for the finale was a play in pantomime, in which the middle-aged lady played the heroine, in a long train which she carefully held up all the time; the other lady played the young lover in yellow tights and a red cloak; the tumbler, the clowns, and the manager, all wearing Russian caps and blouses trimmed with rabbit-skin over their workaday trousers, interfered each after his manner with the course of true love; and the stout acrobat with a scarlet-horned hood over the inevitable crimson satin and red stockings, appeared as a friendly devil and made all the stage furniture dance to distract the attention of the rest of the company from the antics of the lovers. The devil ended by letting off a lot of fireworks right in front of the "stalls," and this time we got up and ran, regardless of our chairs. It was not as dangerous as it looked, however, for the fireworks promptly fizzled out, and I for one was so weak with laughter by then that I could not even start when a cracker went off under my nose.

The whole centre of the ring had been invaded by a swarm of young men and lads of the peasant class, who obviously had not paid a peseta for the privilege. The manager, wearing a monstrous Emperor William moustache fiercely curling up to his eyebrows, had at intervals blandly requested them to retire and not incommode the ladies. They always retired with perfect politeness, to return again the moment his back was turned. When the circus was over this portion of the audience at once blocked the only exit, and gave us time to observe the back of the scenery of the pantomime, which was remarkable. A sheet of painted canvas stood on end, held in place by some mysterious law of cohesion, for visible supports it had none; and how the red devil, who must have weighed a good fifteen stone, contrived to jump in and out of the window without bringing the whole thing down will always be for me an insoluble mystery.

The *fonda* was less of an hotel than ever this evening, and we were warned that we must, willy-nilly, leave by the night diligence, because a *viajante* (commis-voyageur) had engaged my room and would want to go to bed when the Fair meeting of the Commercial Club closed about 2 a.m. But the fun of the Fair was not yet over for us, and the little window overlooking the main square now became for me a kind of Royal Box at the opera, music and all.

At nine o'clock the band took up its position under my window, and the fireworks began. Another point I have never quite understood is why Spanish fireworks even in remote little towns like Villamartín are always good; and how it is that every remote little town manages to keep its own firework-maker. But the profusion of devices in interlacing circles of arabesques leads me to suspect an Arabic origin for this as for so many other popular junkets in Spain.

The Villamartín fireworks were beautiful, differing from those of the big towns only in quantity, not at all in quality, and the set pieces were quite the most attractive to the crowd, whose inherited instincts are all for the arabesque in art.

After the fireworks came a cinematograph, still accompanied by the band, whose repertoire consisted of six pieces, very well played, which they had been repeating at intervals all day. The people grew wildly enthusiastic over the moving pictures, and shouted and laughed and clapped like children, at the runaway who upsets every one he meets as he evades his pursuers, at the illicit lover who hides under the dinner-table and turns it over so as to spill the soup into the lady's lap, and at all the other stale old jokes which seemed to be brand-new to these unsophisticated southerners. There was no risk at all of our going to sleep and forgetting our diligence now. No one but a deaf mute could have closed an eye in the main square of Villamartín that night.

After midnight, when the cinematograph closed, I laid me down fondly imagining I might get a little sleep; but the clamour of the voices in no way diminished. On the contrary, as the night wore on it began to rise louder and louder, until it became a perfect roar. Now and then it would die down for a few minutes, until a boyish voice shouted something that I could not catch, when it began again worse than ever, still good-natured, but sounding ever more impatient, as if the self-restraint of the crowd were rapidly becoming exhausted.

At last, about half-past one, a distant noise like thunder made itself heard above all the human din, and then the crowd seemed to go perfectly mad, yelling and shouting like Bedlam let loose. It was time to get ready to leave anyhow, so I rose from my sleepless bed and went to the window.

Then I saw what it all meant. It was the *encierro*, the bringing in of the bulls for the bull-fight next day. In this case they were not full grown bulls; only year-old bullocks, and of these there were but two, the rest of the future victims being heifers. For fighting bulls cost a good deal of money, and Villamartín is a small town and not particularly rich: so the sportsmen of the ring here have to content themselves with the inexpensive heifer and "yarlin'," as they say in Devon.

To hear the yells of delight raised when they came in sight, one would have thought that all Villamartín was out to receive the bullocks and their decoy: but as a matter of fact all Villamartín except the dregs had long gone home to bed, and the howling mob consisted entirely of a few men of mature years, financially interested in the bull-ring, and a crowd of boys and lads, the rag-tag and bobtail of the working classes, for the respectable working men and their families do not approve of the "sport." These two elements in the Spanish social system nowadays form the immense majority of those who still support what is called "the national sport." Yet tourists seem to imagine that they represent the nation! So well is it recognised by the governing classes that the bull-fight has ceased to appeal to any save the riff-raff and those to whom, in one capacity or another, it is a source of income, that legislative attempts have been made to forbid the bull-fights on Sunday, because if they only took place on week-days the aforesaid dregs of the working classes would find it difficult to attend at the cost of a day's wages, and the whole brutal concern would soon come to an end. But the vested interests are tremendously strong, and capital has great power in Spain; so the bull-fight still goes on, and the tourists go to see it, and Spanish social reformers shrug their shoulders when they are told by foreigners that the first step to social reform in Spain must be the suppression of the bull-ring, which the foreigners' entrance money largely helps to keep going, and of which their mere presence is supposed by amateurs to express approval.

But this is another of the tragedies of Spain, and Rosario and her boy, who hate the very name of bull-fight, though they are mere peasants and never heard of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, did not talk about it that night with me as we watched the tumultuous passage of a particularly lively heifer across the square under my window. Setting aside humanitarian considerations, it was a picturesque sight enough, for the victims of the morrow, surrounded and steered by half a dozen stolid old cows with bells on their necks, were preceded and followed by the *garrochistas*, those herders of the wild cattle, with the high-peaked saddles and great square stirrups and long poles with iron points, which form so effective a group on post-cards purporting to represent the everyday life of Spain. Some of the rabble had gone out to meet the procession with torches, and these still flared as the crowd surged by, making curious yellow cross-lights when they fell on the glare of the arc lights of the town.

I have been told that it was once proposed to start a branch of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals at Madrid, and that in order to obtain funds a great bull-fight was organised. I do not know whether Ben Trovato is responsible for this story, but I have myself met a member of that Society, an English lady of mature years, who refused to subscribe to an entertainment in Spain because it was to take place on a Sunday, and then quarrelled violently with her husband because he refused to take tickets for her for the bull-fight on Easter Day! This is a true story, though the well-known Italian raconteur might be proud to father it. I remember also a British curate of extreme evangelical opinions, who gave at a luncheon party a full, true, and particular account, with realistic details, of the disembowelling of a horse and the wounding of a *torero* that he had witnessed, embellished with the usual expressions of horror at the innate degradation of a nation which supported such barbarities. Some unkind person present remarked that it was believed that the Bishop of Gibraltar objected to his chaplains attending the bull-fight; to which the ingenuous curate replied: "Ah, but you see I went in without my clerical collar"—the fatuous immorality of which remark closed the conversation.

I was not altogether sorry when the time came to start for Algodonales. I had never heard such prolonged and uncontrolled noise made by human beings before, and much though the whole thing had amused me I do not care if I never hear such a noise again. When we made our way out into the brilliantly lighted square most of the crowd appeared to be drunk, but riff-raff though they might be, they were civil to the last, and good-naturedly lurched aside in a bunch to make room for us to pass into the comparative darkness of the street where the diligence awaited us, we, needless to say, being the only passengers who wished to leave the town just then.

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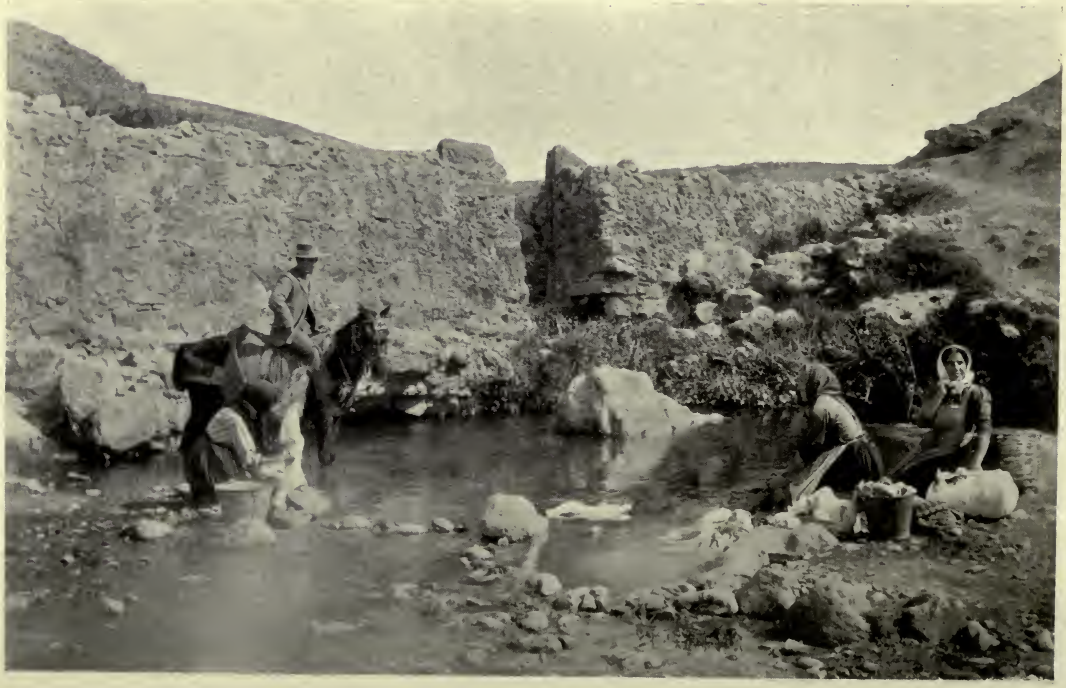

A PREHISTORIC WEIR,

CHAPTER VII

Mountain philosophy—A Rembrandt mother and child—Egyptian cotton fields—The Khalif and the *cañeria*—My lodging in a bakery—Embarrassing hospitality—An Arabic banner—Subterranean reservoirs—The Way of the Cross.

It was pitch dark, and the sky was clouded when we started from Villamartín, and the creaking and jolting of the crazy vehicle down the sharp slope from the town to the bridge over the Guadalete would have brought my heart into my mouth had I not been too tired and sleepy to care what happened. Rosario smiled at my terrors. Being a Serrana (mountain woman) by birth, she was not in the least alarmed when the diligence seemed to be diving head-foremost to perdition. "Even if we upset," she said, "we should come to no harm, for the road was so narrow and the banks so steep that we could not fall far." She also told me that there was a much better road on the other side, but as we were starting late and were a light load, the driver, an old acquaintance of hers, had chosen a short cut which in winter is a water-course.

Protected by the Providence which looks after fools, we presently landed with a final bone-shaking jerk on the high road, and thence proceeded for several miles in comparative comfort, so much so indeed that we all three went to sleep, and the boy so soundly that he hardly woke till we got within hail of his native village: for this is the King's highway, and well looked after, as are all of its class, by Government road-menders. I, however, was roused by a stop and voices at a wayside *venta*, a peasant drinking-place with a deep porch and vine-bowered poles set up in front to give shelter from the sun. Finding that we were to be there ten minutes, while the driver refreshed himself with *aguardiente* (his offer of which, as it is a fierce spirit largely made in its cheaper forms from potatoes, I politely declined), I got down to warm my chilled limbs by movement, for we were now pretty high up and the air was cold.

Behind us, already a long way off, the lights of Villamartín still twinkled as gaily as if the night were yet young. The black clouds had broken, and the young moon stuck one slender horn out from their midst, while near at hand a patch of burning weeds cast a Rembrandtesque glow on a handsome young woman seated before a *choza* built of bamboos and maize stalks, with an infant at her breast. One wondered why in the world she was awake and up at four in the morning, but a voice at my elbow explained it:—

"*Señora, por Dios, una perilla pa' pan!*" ["Lady, for God's sake a little dog (½d.) for bread!"]

The ubiquitous beggar, in this case a ragged child eight or nine years old, was on the watch for a possible penny from some weary traveller who might give the coin in order to be freed from the unmusical professional whine.

I weakly gave the *perilla.* No other beggars were near to see, and the picture was worth it. I continually regret as I travel in Spain that I was not born a painter.

It was another *nuit blanche* for me after that. Any one who knows the joy and the glory of daybreak and sunrise over the hills will understand that one would not willingly lose a moment of the glowing change from darkest shadow to glowing dawn. It is not fully light in these latitudes before six in September, and the beauty of the morning does not culminate till nearly eight. The boy slept dreamlessly, and poor tired Rosario dozed with her head on his shoulder, but I sat and gazed till my eyes were dazzled by the splendour of the sun on the everlasting hills.

About 7.30 we came to a *venta* by a fine new bridge with one arch spanning the river. It was only built a few years ago, when the high road was extended to Algodonales. Until then this thriving village, with some 7000 inhabitants and a large trade in fruit and vegetables and walnut wood, had no communication with the outer world save by a mule track. Now it is on one of the main roads from Ronda to Jerez, and I hear that since I was there it has been provided with a motor-service from Jerez. From the bridge to Algodonales is a shady climb, the scenery growing more beautiful at every turn; and Algodonales itself is one of the prettiest villages I have seen in Spain, all orchards and walnut groves, I only had two objections to it. The first was that the spacious entrance was the favourite meeting-place of all the women of the neighbourhood, with their babies, who cried a good deal; and the second was that the one little window of the bedroom opened on to a pigsty. This Rosario apologised for, saying that she knew English ladies did not like smells, but if I could otherwise be comfortable here, the pigsty should be cleaned out every day during my visit, instead of—as was customary—once a month.

I really did not like that pigsty, but it was impossible to wound the susceptibilities of an entire family so full of genuine hospitality by declining the room, and I knew that I should see more of peasant life as an inmate of the *tahona*[1] than I possibly could in a lodging apart from Rosario. So I graciously permitted pretty blue-eyed Dolores to make up beds for herself, her husband, and her children on the floor of the granary, and induced her as a favour not to clear out her one chest of drawers for me.

And there I slept for a week, with the pigs in front, the poultry behind, and a pony in a stable to my right, which got loose regularly every night and compelled me to call my hosts to catch him, lest he should break his knees over a stone feeding-trough and water-vessel left in the yard by a forgotten generation. For I knew that if they had not given me their room they would hear the noise for themselves, and I could not let their pony come to grief, because they were too hospitable to me. By closing my window and its shutters I was able to exclude most of the smell of the pigs, and there was no lack of air, because the heavy door had dragged itself half off its hinges with age, and would not close within six inches. It had to be fixed with a chair, but, as Rosario pointed out, I need not be in the least nervous if it opened of itself any time, "because I was among friends; not in a *fonda*, where one never knew who might come along and try one's door at night."

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[1] Arabic name for a bakery, always used here.

It is usual for whole families of Spaniards, even of a much richer class, to use one dressing-table and washstand in common. Indeed, at a furnished flat which we took at a high rent one summer at the seaside, we found only one small washstand supplied for our whole party, consisting of three adults and a servant. Thus it never occurred to Rosario or Dolores that I could mind washing with my door half open, and I got over the slight inconvenience by hanging my dressing-gown over the gap, while my host and his apprentices sat and smoked just outside.

The one thought of the family seemed to be how to secure me the most enjoyment possible, and each day expeditions were planned. The whole village used to turn out to see us start: I on my *jamugas*, with my host leading the donkey, Rosario on another donkey or a mule led by her son, seated on the top of the *serón* (panniers) containing our food for the day and my tools and photographic apparatus; for (although this is somewhat off the point) the primary object of my mountain expeditions is archæological, and I am always on the look out for ruined castles or other interesting remains worth digging in. This makes one's luggage rather heavy, but it is a solid satisfaction to pretend that one's pleasure trips are undertaken in the cause of science.

One of our jaunts from Algodonales was to Zahara, the strong fortress of which I have already made mention. My host's name was Salvador Malo (Wicked Saviour!), and he loved to be told that although wicked by name he was not so by nature. I pressed this brilliant *jeu de mots* on him at Zahara, where he pulled me up to the very top of the ruined castle by main force. It seems to have been destroyed by an earthquake, the masses of fallen masonry are so split up and tumbled about. The Christians are said to have surrendered Zahara through lack of water during the Granada war, and one can well believe it, for they never seemed to have grasped the necessity of keeping up the admirable Arabic systems either of storing water or irrigation; and once they let the great subterranean *aljibes*[1] get into disrepair, the garrison of Zahara must have been at the mercy of the enemy, since the only springs are outside the old town walls, two or three hundred feet below the fortress.

The view from the crumbling towers is superb, and the little town climbing up the precipitous hill is full of interesting remains, the most important of which is perhaps a square yard of red silk of Arabic manufacture called *tafetán*, with the remains of some Arabic characters in white. This was the banner of the Moslems, surrendered after the fall of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella. It is now regarded as a religious relic, and is carried once a year in procession through the streets after the image of the patron saint of Zahara. I must not forget to mention that the only access to Zahara, with its 1700 inhabitants, is a bridle-path. Very neat woodwork in walnut is done here, as also at Algodonales, but the Zahara style is more distinctly Arabic, and I saw some brackets and a spice box carved with "stalactite" ornamentation which might have come out of a mosque. They had been made by the village carpenter as a wedding gift to his wife.

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[1] Underground reservoirs for rain-water.

Longer trips were planned for me, always to places inaccessible to wheeled vehicles, such as Grazalema, perched under the shadow of San Cristóbal, the highest peak in the Sierra de Ronda. Here admirable cloth is still woven by hand, and fetches a good price in all the country round, for it has the reputation of being indestructible. The once flourishing town has now dwindled to a village, and many of its fine houses are in ruins.

Most of my stay at Algodonales was, however, spent in the immediate neighbourhood, which is so richly wooded and so well watered as to present a most picturesque contrast to the grim mountain, which the natives say towers 700 metres above the village. I do not think it is as high as that—in fact, I should guess that the frowning cliff which springs straight up from the level of my pigsty into the blue sky above, does not really measure from the pigsty to the top more than 400 or 500 feet. But the villagers think they ought to know, for on that barren crag are perched three iron crosses, and every year the young men and maidens toil up a path which seems fit only for goats, in the performance of the religious exercise known as the Way of the Cross. The older people and the children are excused, for only active youth can safely surmount that stony way, and for them there is a humble altar set up half-way, whereat they worship while the priest says a Mass for the safe return of the adventurous pilgrims.

The street leading to this mountain path is called Calvary, and the whole ceremony is a survival of bygone days, when the Passion Play took place in every mountain town, with living actors instead of the images now carried in procession, and every penitent must walk on his bare and bleeding feet along the Way of the Cross before he could hope to be shriven of his sins.

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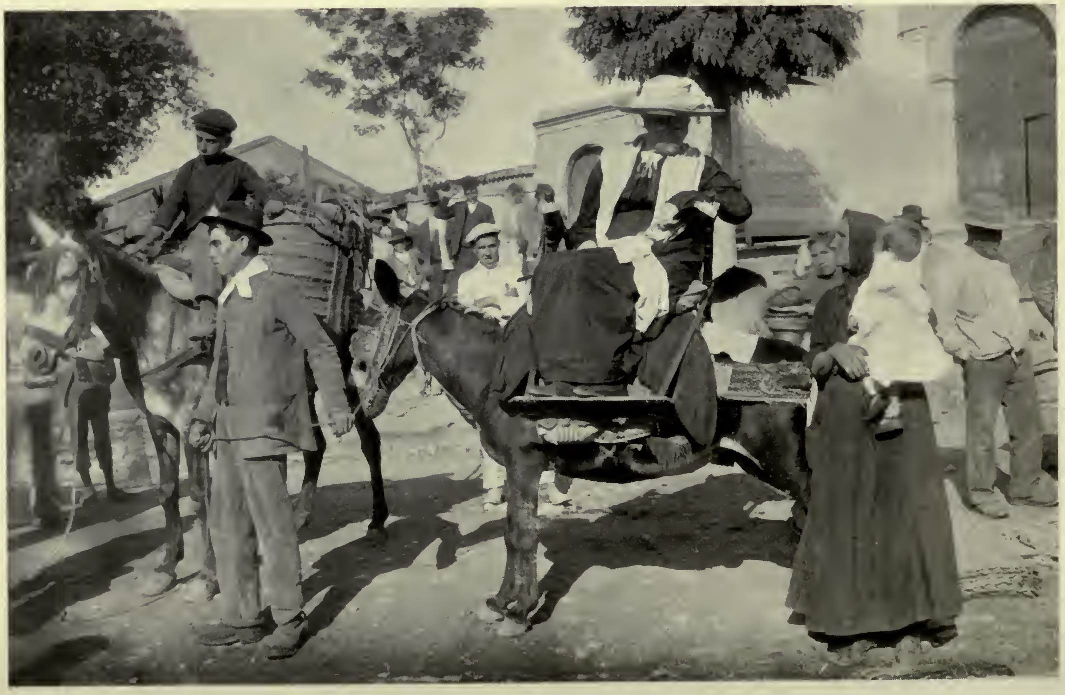

"A SADDLE FOR FEMININITY,"

CHAPTER VIII

Fancy bread and sun-worship—Prehistoric sandals—A bower of oleanders—An Andalucian St. John—Fashion and footpaths—The *mauvais pas*—The midday rest—A mountain storm—Thunder, lightning, and flood—Kind-hearted donkey-drivers—A welcome shelter.

All too soon my allotted time came to an end, and I found myself at seven o'clock of a glorious September morning bidding farewell to my kind friends, as I started for a ride of 30 kilometres over the mountains to the railway station at Morón de la Frontera. My host as a parting gift presented me with some curious bread of his own making, in what is called a *caracól* design—a primitive sun-symbol of Egyptian origin, had he only known it. I asked him where he got the design, and he said, "From his father: it was nothing, but as I liked *cosas antiguas* (old things) it had occurred to him to make it." I have since found that this form of "little bread" is peculiar to Algodonales, and my parting gift is preserved in a glass case with other interesting survivals of sun-worship in the Tartessus of the Greeks, the Baetica of the Romans, and the Andalucia of to-day.

This was one of the longest and most beautiful rides I have ever taken, as also the most adventurous.

I had indeed cut my visit short by a few days because there were indications that the weather was likely to break up, and this mountain path—often no more than a goat-track—is impassable after rain, when parts of it may be washed away into the river Guadálporcón hundreds of feet below.

We climbed up and up for a couple of hours, until vines and olive groves were left behind, and forests of evergreen oaks, covered with acorns, took their place. This oak, which grows almost up to the line where snow sometimes lies till June, is only second in value to the olive on mountain estates, for it costs very little in labour, and its acorns are the best food that can be given to the droves of brown long-haired pigs which haunt these lofty solitudes.

On we went, sometimes up the hill, sometimes down under the shade of the oaks, sometimes along a watercourse through thickets of brambles and pink oleanders, which in this climate grow almost into trees when their roots can reach a stream. Over one such thicket a wild vine, growing from a rock above, had spread its tangled branches, and the goatherds had cut and trained it to form a shelter impervious to the sun. A flock of goats was browsing around, guarded by a man and a boy wearing wide straw hats, blue cotton jackets, and short trousers with striped socks and sandals made of twisted *esparto* grass, just like those in use three thousand years or more ago among their Tartessian progenitors. They lay half asleep under their bower of vine leaves and oleander blossom, but rose at our approach and insisted on my sitting down to rest in the shade, while they chatted outside in the sun with José. It was so cool and pretty that I would gladly have stopped there for the noonday siesta, but it was still too early for that, and we had many miles yet to travel.

A cry of distress from a nannygoat broke the sunny calm round us, and the boy ran up the hill like a hare to see what had happened to his charges. The last I saw as I rode away was the little goatherd standing on a rock far above us, waving a hand in adieu, with an injured kid slung round his neck. One constantly meets with incidents of this kind, and of course one is inevitably reminded of the boy St. John with his lamb. In a recent country fair I saw two men taking turns to carry a full-sized goat in their arms, she having somehow hurt a leg on the journey into the town. It was less picturesque than a kid on the shoulders, but the spirit was the same; for the goat could still walk, so that not necessity but kindness dictated the action.

We met few people in those beautiful but desolate hills. José told me that in the course of a few weeks, when the acorns ripened, a number of families would come from the villages round and live in *chozas* during the harvest. The *chozas* of the Sierra are very different from those of the plains. They are built of stones laid dry one on the other, and roofed with *esparto* grass from the streams, and they almost always have some sort of a chimney, for the cold here on autumn nights and on wet days is considerable. But these stone-built huts can be made very snug and warm, by mortaring the walls within and roofing with something more durable than reed, and I can imagine no more delightful summer holiday than one spent in a well-made *choza* among these glorious mountains—provided that the *choza* lay within reach of a Tartessian castle or necropolis wherein to excavate in the intervals of enjoying the view.

The few people we did meet always appeared at inconvenient moments. A fat young lady riding a very small donkey with very wide *jamugas*, and carrying a beautiful flounced silk parasol, suddenly came into the picture half-way down a precipitous hill, so steep and so strewn with boulders that I, feeling discretion to be the better part of valour, had got off my donkey to walk. Indeed I very often did get off to walk downhill on that journey, for in many places I felt that the only way to avoid diving over the donkey's head would be to hold on to his tail, and it seemed on the whole safer as well as more dignified to trust to my own feet. The young lady with the parasol was coming up as I went down, but I am sure she would have held on to the donkey's tail any number of times rather than get off once had our situations been reversed, for I never saw a more confirmed expression of bland laziness than hers. She was too sleepy even to respond to the "Go with God" with which we greeted her, and that is a breach of good manners that nothing but the torpor of extreme fatness could condone. I am not very clear how we managed to pass her and her convoy of servants and baggage donkeys: I only remember that I had to climb on to the top of the nearest boulder and stand there for a long time to be out of the way while the train went by.

She was the daughter of a neighbouring landowner, who lived in a fine house built on the ruins of a castle round the spur of a hill to our left, as José informed me. He could not remember the name either of the family or the castle, and I was not particularly anxious to know either. What interested me was the notion of a rich landowner building himself a fine house on the slope of a hill to which no road could be made. It was for the olives and the cork trees, said José: that *caballero* owned thousands and thousands of them, and came out to the Sierra from Arcos with all his family to "take the mountain air" when the crops were coming in.

Our next rencontre was a more exciting one. We had to cross the side of a steep hill sloping sharply down to the river far below, by a path just wide enough for the donkey and the mule to put one foot before the other, and no more. This in itself would have been nothing, had the slope been clothed with vegetation like the rest of the mountain. But it was the "bad step" of the pass, José said, the place which after a storm even of summer rain is not only dangerous but impossible, for the hillside here is of a shaly sort of slate, and a very little water is enough to send the whole path slithering down to the river. It was perfectly safe now, said José, for there had been no rain for three months, and everything was dust-dry. But my honour would well understand, seeing the bad step with her own eyes, why he could not have attempted to take her the journey to Morón, much as he delighted in pleasing her, had the dreaded thunderstorm come up last night, as he had been a little afraid it might.

"My honour" did indeed understand, and looked back rather anxiously at the hills behind, where a lovely but ominous background of purple-blue clouds threw the gorgeous sunshine around us into strong relief. Did José think the storm would come up during the day? Had we not better press on towards some house where we could shelter if we were caught in the rain?

My honour must free herself from anxiety. In no case could we hasten here, where a false step would be fatal, and there was no house within many miles. And the storm was still distant, on the other side of San Cristóbal: may be, if God pleased, it would not overtake us; and at the worst we should be well over the pass before it came.

As a rule I tie the halter round my donkey's neck and let it pick its own way, but here José led it, leaving the pack mule to follow as best it could. It was clear that he felt a little anxious, and he explained that some heavily loaded animal must have had a slip at one spot, where the path disappeared altogether, and we had to make a detour above. For some minutes we had heard a voice singing, and just at this point a lad riding a donkey appeared. That boy proceeded with the utmost nonchalance to make a new path across the loose shale, rather than take the trouble to go off the direct line as we had done. He shouted to his donkey, kicked it hard with his heels, encased in the usual *esparto* sandals with soles an inch thick, and took the dangerous bit at a trot! It was not done for effect, as one might have imagined, for he paid no attention at all to us, and we heard him gaily singing as he rode on, apparently unaware that he had risked a sudden and terrible death by his foolhardy performance.

After this our way led downwards, and at one o'clock, as the clouds seemed to have dispersed, we ventured to stop for a rest under two fine walnut trees which had sown themselves above the bank of the river, now beginning to assume respectable proportions, but still a good way below us. José unharnessed his animals, fixed up a sort of tent with the blanket from under my *jamugas* and the cloth from his mule, to give us shade, and after we had lunched he lay down with his head on my hold-all and I with mine on my riding-cushion, and we both slept soundly for over an hour. More than that we could not allow, he had said, if I was to catch the five o'clock train at Morón, for we were already behindhand owing to my frequent pauses to enjoy the scenery, and we still had a very long way to go.

While we slept the clouds came up, and I awoke to find a thundery suffocating heat in the air, the sun obscured, and not a breath of wind anywhere. José looked grave, and devoutly thanked God that we were over the pass. Had we been caught by this weather on the other side we should have had no alternative but to return to Algodonales, and the Señora would not have crossed this pass before next summer.

As he talked he was hurriedly saddling the animals and packing the lunch basket, etc., into the panniers, while I unstrapped my hold-all and got out umbrella and mackintosh, which undoubtedly I should very soon need.

"There is no alternative," said José, "I must take your honour to shelter in the Venta del Albercón. It is only half a league out of the way, but if we do not find shelter we shall be drowned. What a fool I was to allow your honour to leave Algodonales, but I did it for the best, and Salvador agreed that the storm would not come up before to-morrow."

Long before we got to the *venta* we were wet to the skin. The rain fell in one unbroken sheet, through which streaks of lightning dazzled us at appallingly frequent intervals, accompanied by peals of thunder which sounded perfectly terrific in their reverberations among the hills.

As soon as possible José led the way down to the banks of the stream, and dragged the animals across at the risk of breaking their legs among the rough stones that filled the bed. Already the biggest stones were almost covered, and José said that if we delayed to cross till we got to the ford the river would be up to our necks. Thence we made our way, I hardly know how, through the oleanders and brambles to what was really only a goat-track some twenty feet or so up the bank, and by this time the situation was so critical that José ceased to apologise, for all his energies were devoted to urging on the terrified beasts. Fortunately they knew and loved him, and his caressing voice soothed even the mule, which was young and got half wild with terror when the lightning flashed in its eyes.

We passed the ford where the Algodonales track crossed a by-road from Olvera to Villamartín, leaving it on our left. It was already a raging torrent eight to ten feet deep and rising higher every minute, and all the little tributary watercourses which had been stony wastes when we started were now turbid streams, rushing down to swell the flood. I have never seen anything to equal the rapidity with which the waters gathered, and I really began to wonder whether José and I would ever be seen again by our respective families, for it seemed as if at any moment we might be overwhelmed by an avalanche of stones and shale tumbled down from the peaks above us by those nightmare torrents which had suddenly sprung into being where an hour ago all was dust-dry. It also crossed my mind that my family, who were away in England, had not the remotest idea where I was, my trip having been a sudden inspiration of which I had not informed them; and I pictured my friend Rosario distractedly seeking my corpse in company with the widow and children of José (I learnt afterwards that he was a bachelor) and wildly telegraphing to break the news, hampered by having no notion of my family's address.

Fortunately these gloomy forebodings were not fulfilled. A peal of thunder that seemed to shake the whole world, and a flash of lightning so close over our heads that we were almost blinded, heralded our arrival at the *venta*, and in a moment I found myself lifted off the donkey and half carried into the cottage by the kindly people within, while José slipped the panniers—which would not pass through the door—off his mule, and led the two poor, frightened, half-drowned beasts through a clean white-washed kitchen into a roomy stable beyond, where he patted and soothed them until they were quite quiet and happy, before he gave a thought to his own comfort. The storm had come up so suddenly that although he had dragged out an extra wrap for me, he had been unable or unwilling to stop and put on his own blanket, which was in the panniers under my luggage, and all my persuasions had failed to induce him to take mine, which had been thrown over the luggage, when we started, to protect my camera from the sun.

There is an impression abroad that Spaniards are not kind to their animals, but this is a great mistake.

"How should we not do the best we can for our donkeys, when we depend on them for our livelihood?" one of my *arrieros* remarked on my praising his tender care of an injured mule.

True one often sees even quite young and active mules and donkeys in the villages of the Sierra with their knees badly broken; but when one realises that most of their work has to be done on tracks such as I have endeavoured to describe—for, thanks to the neglect of the governing classes, there are thousands of villages in Spain which can only be reached by such paths—one has to admit that it is a wonder that the condition of the beasts of burden is no worse. And indeed I know for a fact that many poor men working on the land never let their donkeys go hungry while they have a bite of bread for themselves, so that my heart often aches to see the animals thin and out of condition, knowing it means there is want in the home.

Having all my luggage with me (a further advantage of travelling on donkey-back) I was able to get out of my wet clothes at once, and while I changed in a roomy loft over the kitchen, where the family slept and kept their corn, beans, winter melons, and other stores, the pretty daughter of the *ventera* told me that although autumn and winter storms were frequent enough on these hills, they had never known one come up so suddenly or with such rapidity so early in the season. We learnt afterwards that it was indeed rather a cyclone than an ordinary thunderstorm, and that it did terrible damage on the other side of the range of mountains, flooding an entire village on a river bank, and drowning an unfortunate gipsy family encamped under a bridge in the bed of the stream, which no one expected any water to reach until at least a month later.

CHAPTER IX

Rustic humour—The haunted *venta*—Prehistoric graves—A deferred journey—More mountain hospitality—The end of my ride—A lost train—A night in a *posada*—Chivalrous José—Mixed company—Good-bye to the hills.

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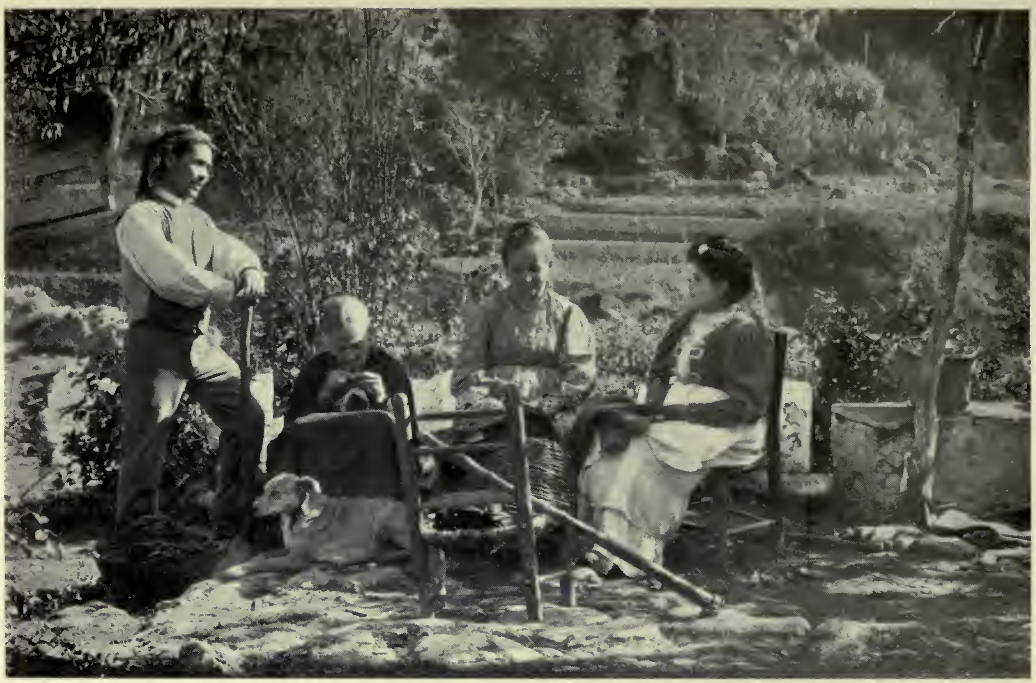

RUSTIC LOVERS.

tell in Algodonales. It was not strictly true that I had heard such a tale, but I know by experience that an inquiry of the kind, if made sympathetically, often brings forth some interesting folk-lore.

It did so in this case, and the story proved so strange that I must tell it in full.

I learnt that the *venta* is haunted by the ghost of a white cat, which appears outside the door and vanishes up the gully in the direction of a place called Las Cuevas.

How did they know it was a ghost, and not a real cat?

Because there was no white cat on the premises, and because it answered when spoken to. Many people had seen it, and if they said

"*Gatito, gátito, porque tan flaquito?*"
(Little cat, little cat, why art thou so thin, or feeble?)

The cat would answer

"*Porque 'tamo' li'to',*"

which is the peasant pronunciation of "*estamos listos.*" The correct meaning of this is "Because we are ready," or "clever" (*listo* has both meanings), but they here gave "*listo*" the meaning of "finished" or "done with."

But why did the cat go up to the Cuevas (caves)? And what caves did it go to? And who were referred to as "finished"?

Well, it went there because there were other ghosts there, many of them animals in all sorts of shapes; but the cat was the only one that spoke.

There always had been a *susto* in that gully. The *cuevas*? Well, they were just caves, like any other caves in the Sierra. The gipsies slept in them on their way from one fair to another, and shepherds too were glad enough to take shelter there from storms like the present one. Would my honour like to see them? The storm was passing over now, and they could take me up there in a moment, before I continued my journey.

José was quite willing to accompany me to Las Cuevas, but pointed out that it was already so late that we could not hope to catch the five o'clock train at Morón, as the road, although quite safe for the rest of the way, would be muddy in places and make our progress slow. The Señora must understand that it would be night before we arrived, and Señoras seldom liked riding at night, although he had observed that day that English Señoras, if they were all like me—the first specimen of the race that he had come across—were much more valiant than those of his own country.

The *ventera's* family, now quite determined to overcome all difficulties in the way of a visit which would "give importance" to their ghosts, flung themselves into the breach. Why should I not stay the night in their house? True, it was only a house of poor people, but I should have a *catre* in the kitchen, and the mattress of Mariquita, and the bed-linen from her chest, all quite new for her approaching wedding. And then I could go on next day at my ease for the afternoon train, for certainly it would be fine to-morrow after the storm, and the mud would have dried up; while as for food, if I would condescend to share the family *puchero*, it would be very rich to-day, for they had killed a fowl to put in it, and there were fresh eggs and goat cheese, and plenty of wine.

Who could resist such an offer? Certainly no archæologist on the track of caves and ghosts.

And now comes the really strange part of my story. I found the Cuevas to be a series of chambered tombs, more or less destroyed by the wind and the rain of ages, but unmistakably sepulchral, the necropolis of a race which still used implements of stone, as many remains of such lying in the débris around testified. And on the morrow, with the aid of José and the sons of the widowed *ventera*, I set to work to open one as yet untouched, and found, as I expected, a human skeleton extended full length on the ground, and with it sherds of broken pottery which enabled me to astonish my peasant friends by making a vague guess at the tens of centuries that had elapsed since "those dead men" were buried here.

I saw at a glance that the Cuevas had a scientific importance, for close at hand I found the relics of a remarkable temple to the sun, with its stone altar for, I fear, human sacrifices, and a stone seat for the priests. It was beyond my power to neglect such a chance for research, and I sent José back to his own village while I lingered on for a week at the *venta*, digging at the tombs all day. And I slept, attended by Mariquita, in a tiny tworoomed cottage built near her mother's house for her to live in when she married, and shared the simple but excellent meals of the family, who most considerately suppressed the garlic as long as I stayed with them.

And now for the point of my long story. Until the tombs were opened and the skeletons discovered, no one in the neighbourhood had the remotest idea that there had ever been burials in Las Cuevas. How then did the place get the reputation of being haunted? The *susto* was of old standing, for the *ventera* was far from young, and she remembered hearing her grandfather say that *his* grandfather, like himself, had seen the white cat in the doorway of the *venta*, which the same family had owned for generations.

Upon examination I found that the present house, rebuilt when the actual owner was married some twenty-five years ago, stood on the ruins of a Tartessian construction, the walls of which, over a yard thick, were still visible, forming the boundary of a paved floor on which tables and benches were set out for the wayfarers frequenting the place. Previous to the rebuilding, the ruined walls had enclosed a tank or reservoir for winter rains, about ten feet deep. It had been filled up with stones from the hillside, because the stagnant water proved unhealthy; but the place retained its ancient name, the *Venta* of the *Albercón* or tank. There was no doubt about it, those ruined walls were pre-Roman, for I had to work for days to get through the fellow to them which sealed the entrance to one of my chamber tombs; and the mortar was crystallised with age.

Why, I ask again—for I am quite unable to answer the question myself—do these unlettered Andalucian peasants think they see the ghost of a white cat come out of a modern house and disappear into a burial-place, which may have dated from somewhere near the period when the people of ancient Egypt worshipped a cat, among other animal deities? The only thing I can certainly say is that the legend is one of which no one can tell the origin, and that no one would be more astonished than these ghost-seers to learn that a cat was something more than a cat when those tombs were first dug out of the rock. From a certain jealousy concerning my discovery, with which any archæologist will sympathise, I have slightly misdescribed the locale of the haunted caves. But every word of the story is strictly true, and I am quite willing to give full particulars to any one who takes a scientific interest in the matter. He will not, however, hear anything about the cat ghost unless he speaks Spanish freely and adopts an attitude of awed credulity, for no Spanish peasant will talk of ghosts if he thinks he is being laughed at.

When I finally left the *venta* I had to charter an extra donkey to carry the load of sherds of pottery, bricks, stones, and mortar that I had gathered in the neighbourhood of Las Cuevas, to say nothing of skulls, jaw-bones, and teeth, which Mariquita shuddered at and refused to touch when I was packing them. But the rest of the journey to Morón was accomplished in perfect weather, and nothing worthy of note happened on the way.

I missed my train, owing to my inveterate habit of stopping to study stones on the road. And the result was that I had to spend the night in a tiny and far-from-clean room over the *posada* where José stabled his beasts, because the only houses of call were full of *viajantes* and I could find nowhere else to sleep. José himself waited on me, for a *posada* provides no service, although a modest tip produced a pair of nice clean sheets from the landlady of the stable. He brought me hot strong coffee from the café which is always to be found even in small Spanish villages, coaxed hot water from some unknown place, for there is never a kettle in a *posada*, and slept with his head on my baggage at the foot of the stairs leading up to my room.

"It was no place for a lady," he said, "but at least he knew the people to be honest, and I could feel quite safe (as indeed I did) with himself close at hand."

I only caught three fleas in my bed, which I thought a moderate allowance for a room over a stable, and when I was awakened by the chumping and stamping of the numerous animals below me I smiled to think of my family's horror could they have seen my quarters that night. They have accustomed themselves, by force of circumstances, to the idea of my sleeping on straw mattresses in country cottages, but this was my first introduction to a *posada*.

I do not know that I yearn to repeat the experiment, but it was worth while for once. The discomfort was atoned for by the picturesqueness of the stable through which I had to pass to get in and out of my room, with the animals and their owners dimly outlined in the light of two or three ancient olive-oil lamps hung here and there on the walls. A Madonna-like young mother with a baby at her breast, resting against a pair of panniers which her husband had backed up with a load of straw and covered with a gay striped rug, formed a pretty contrast to a grey-haired old man who was cooking his supper on a blackened brick stove in a corner near by. And the people of the house, fat and comely and pleasant-looking, sat on a queer little landing half-way upstairs, sewing and chatting under a two-candle-power electric bulb hanging from a wire so thick with flies that it looked like a hempen rope. They seemed quite indifferent to those around, but I saw that they were keeping a watchful eye on the comings and goings below, ready to secure their money at any moment from the customer whose movements indicated an early departure with his donkey. The gallery gave on to a tiny kitchen, where they cooked their own meals, although declining, as the law permits, to cook mine. It was hung with brightly polished brass utensils, and a few bits of coarse pottery adorned the chimney shelf. Among these was a curious old plate of local manufacture, which they sold to me for a few pence when I took my leave in the morning.

And so ended that trip in the Sierra. A chill in the air told me that winter was approaching as I rode down to the station, escorted to the very carriage door by the faithful José; and with a sigh of regret I saw my *jamugas* consigned to the luggage van, knowing that they would now have to lie idle at home for many weeks to come.

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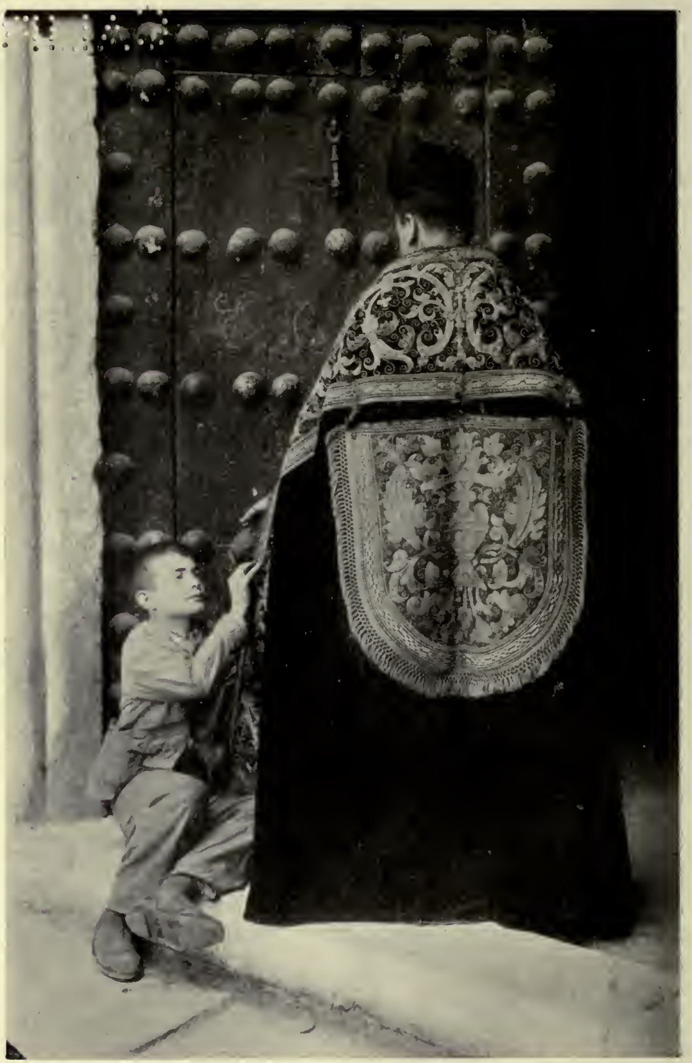

A FUNERAL VESTMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER X

Mourning customs—"Keening" the dead—The night before the funeral—Sympathetic friends—"Accompanying" the mourners—A verbal error—Black masks at a dance—A black-draped house—The locked piano—Three years' seclusion—The mourning of the poor—Black shirts but laughing faces—"Killed in action"—The heroism of Rosa—"My Papa"—Why Paz will be an old maid.

Mourning in Spain is a serious feature of family and social life. Even in the larger towns one sees but a slight tendency to move with the times, and away from Madrid, Seville, or Barcelona the rigid observance of ancient customs is, like the customs themselves, quite Oriental.

I remember being kept awake almost all one night in a large town by an extraordinary concert of lamentable sounds which issued from a tenement house next door. First came a long tenor wail, rising and falling in a minor key, then a precisely similar wail in a deep contralto, and then in a shrill treble, evidently from a child. I learnt next morning that an infant had died in the house in question, and that the father, the mother, and a small brother had been "keening" the dead all night long. This demonstration of grief is not so common now as it was a few years ago, even among the least educated classes, but other peculiarities hardly more in accordance with modern ideas are to be observed among mourners of all ranks.

Of these one of the strangest, to our ideas, is the custom of holding what might be called a wake over the corpse the night after death. The funeral has to take place within twenty-four hours, an excellent sanitary regulation which we English might adopt with advantage. But, as a young lady in deep mourning for her adored mother calmly remarked to me, "It is true that in the cold climate of England dead persons do not decompose so rapidly as here." It is also true that twenty-four hours amply suffice to put the family into mourning in a country where every woman has, as a matter of course, a suit of black in her wardrobe all the year round, so that no time is lost in making clothes for the funeral, and on the night after a death has taken place all the most intimate friends are ready to sit round in token of sympathy.

A great deal of very real kindness is shown in cases of severe illness. Trained nurses are seldom or never called in, but the friends take turns to sit up with the family and the patient, and, if they are not rich, keep them supplied with chickens, eggs, and whatever else may be of use in the sick-room. The custom of "accompanying" the sufferer is, however, sometimes embarrassing to foreigners. On one occasion, when a member of my family was supposed to be *in articulo mortis*, his most intimate Spanish friend almost insisted on sharing my night-watches; and when at length I persuaded him that even his sympathetic presence might prove injurious to one for whom absolute quiet was the only chance, he said with intense conviction—

"At least you must promise to send for me at any moment of the day or night when you know the last hour is at hand, that I may witness the ascent of so noble a soul to heaven!"

My appreciation of what I knew was meant for the truest kindness hardly mitigated my repugnance to the mere suggestion of such an intrusion on one's privacy at such a time. Happily for Don Antonio's feelings as well as for mine, the illness took a favourable turn, and our friend's tears of delight at the good news quickly obliterated the jar he had all unconsciously inflicted on one's susceptibilities at the time of crisis. Another friend, out of sheer courtesy and goodness of heart, contrived to shock still more our British ideas: he came post-haste, on hearing that the patient was given up, to offer his services in the arrangements for the funeral!

Our ideas of keeping the sick-room free from movement or noise, and our refusal to receive at the bedside all the kind Spanish friends who came to inquire, struck them as very strange indeed, for with them sympathy is necessarily expressed by providing plenty of company "to cheer the sufferer" and those near and dear to him. I remember on one occasion being pressed by a friend to go and call on the mother of a girl who was desperately ill with meningitis—a complaint which (if correctly diagnosed) seems curiously common among the well-to-do in this country. I demurred, on the ground that my very slight acquaintance with the lady hardly justified my intruding on her grief and anxiety.

"But she is my cousin, and you are my friend, and she will certainly notice your absence if you do not go."

I went. I counted twelve women and girls in the patient's room, for I was obliged to go upstairs and look at the poor girl through the open door, or be regarded as cruelly unkind by the mother.

She died, as was to be expected, a few days later, and I had to appear at the house of mourning on the evening of the funeral, accompanied by the one member of our family belonging to the dead girl's generation. I had a black dress, but my girl had only a white one, and we had hoped that this might be accepted as an excuse for her non-appearance. By no means. The cousin and her two daughters came in person, swathed in black silk shawls from head to foot, to insist on our both going with them to "*dar el pésame*," to express sympathy with the mourner.

It was one of the most distressing experiences I have had in Spain. We elder people all sat round the room on chairs, sofas, and settees too heavy to move an inch from their appointed places, and one by one we were led into a small inner room where the mother, blind with crying, sat hunched up with her elbows on her knees and her head on her hands, giving loud utterance to her unrestrained grief.

"Oh, my daughter, my dear companion! Oh, my daughter, my dear companion!" she moaned over and over again in a voice hoarse with sobbing, and not in the least knowing what she was saying.

We had to sit down and kiss her tear-drenched cheek and say what a beautiful and charming girl her Belén had been, and offer a conventional prayer for divine consolation, and then some one else came in to take our place, amid a fresh burst of sobs and moans. The poor soul had worked herself into a state of hysterics, but through it all was conscious that she was fulfilling her friends' expectations and doing the right thing by her daughter in thus proving herself helplessly broken down by her trouble. Self-restraint on such an occasion is considered to show coldness of heart and a lack of respect and affection for the dead.

When I came out after my painful interview with the mother, I found all the young cousins and companions of poor Belén in shrieks of laughter, and they all turned on me exclaiming—

"Oh Doña Elena, how funny your Olivita is! What amusing things she says! And what strange customs you have in your country!"

It appeared that my "Olivita" had been trying to explain in her still imperfect Spanish that in England young men and maidens were allowed to go out walking together, unchaperoned as here by "Mamma" on one side and "my aunt" on the other. And in mistake for *pasear*, to go out walking, she had used the word *besar*, which means to kiss. So that our mourners took her to say that it was the custom in England for the men and girls to kiss each other whenever they met in the street, and their amusement at the idea had completely blotted out of their minds for the time being the melancholy reason for their meeting.

The elder ladies took it all as a matter of course.

"Poor children," they remarked; "they are very tired, and they laugh easily. It is quite natural, and generally happens on these sad occasions."

As may be imagined, such vociferous grief does not long endure; but well as I thought I understood the Spanish temperament, I was rather shocked when on one occasion two girls in black masks and dominoes accosted me at a Carnival dance, and revealed themselves as the sisters of a youthful bride who had died, with her baby, less than a month before.

They threw themselves on my mercy, fearing that I might recognise them, and begged me not to betray their escapade to their mother, who believed them to be spending the evening with a sick friend, and whose consent had been with difficulty obtained for them to go out even on that errand, so soon after their sister's death. I think this was an exceptional instance of "quick frost, long thaw," but one often finds women in deep mourning speaking bitterly of the restrictions imposed by custom on their social and even their home life when a near relative dies.

I have heard of the whole house, from the street door to the ladies' boudoir, being hung with black draperies for the nine days of rigorous mourning after the sudden death of the master of the house, and during all that time the women had to sit in semi-darkness, morning, noon, and night. The daughters were not allowed to touch the piano for three full years after their father's death. A friend of theirs and mine told me that the girls, who were very fond of music, and good pianists, moped themselves into actual illness, so keenly did they feel the loss of their favourite occupation after their first grief had worn off, but nothing would induce the mother to have the piano unlocked. They were fresh young girls in their teens when the father died, full of life, of good social position, and with plenty of money to gratify every whim. When I saw them after their three years' seclusion they were pale, thin, and melancholy, and looked like women nearer thirty than twenty in their enveloping chiffon veils, for although they had left off crape they were still clad in black from head to foot.

The friend in question, a young married woman with a devoted husband and two pretty little girls, had herself just emerged from a year's strict retirement after losing her mother. She told me she was looked on by the older generation as an unnatural creature, because she had now begun to play her beloved piano again.

"You cannot tell how I have longed for music sometimes, as I grew accustomed to my loss," she said, "but I could not bring myself to play. It would have seemed so dreadful to my friends and relations. I have often been terribly sad. I have sometimes almost gone mad with depression. My husband has begged me to travel with him, to play the piano, to do anything in the world that would tend to lessen my sadness. But as I never obey him when I am happy, you may guess how little attention

I paid to his wishes when I was mourning for my mother. Now it is a year since she died, and I cannot help it if my neighbours criticise me. I *must* begin to live again."

The strange thing about this shocking exaggeration of the outward semblance of grief is that while almost every woman one meets complains of its absurdity, its evil effects on the health, its cruel inroads on youth and happiness, none of them have the courage actively to rebel.

Poor people, while of necessity rousing themselves speedily to go out in search of the day's wage, are just as strict as the rich in their mourning garb. When a parent dies, everything has to be black: black facings are stitched on to the men's shirt fronts and cuffs, black cotton coats are worn, black neckties in place of collars, and black felt hats, even in the height of summer. The women for their part wear black underclothes beneath their black dresses, and tie up their heads in black handkerchiefs, sometimes pawning all their coloured clothes to pay for the conventional garments of woe. Beneath these gloomy trappings one often sees beaming smiles and eyes full of life and fun; for the workers are nothing if not sincere, and when they feel happy they show it. But when the country is in trouble whole towns and villages seem to feel it; as, for instance, during the Moroccan War of 1909. The massacre of some two thousand soldiers in the death-trap of the Gurugú at Melilla threw a great number of poor families into mourning; and again in 1913, during the campaign of Larache, as it was here called, mourning was widespread. Every day brought news that one or two or ten or twenty men had fallen in the guerilla war carried on against Spain by the arch-bandit El Raisuli: and here not only the immediate family of the dead man wears black for him, but mourning is *de rigueur* among all the collateral relations even to second and third cousins.

This was brought home to me one day when I wanted to photograph a stream where women and girls were washing, for every one of them that day wore black. We finally gave up the attempt, and waited for another occasion, for, as I remarked to my photographer, we ought to introduce in the brilliant sunshine at least one girl dressed in colours.

"Very true," was his answer, "but there is a great deal of mourning about. You see there are so many soldiers dying in Morocco just now."

And many officers too, was my mental addition, for his words sent my thoughts with a painful rebound to a scene of domestic tragedy which I had witnessed not long before.

A lad of twenty-one, fresh from the Military Academy at Toledo, had been killed in his first action, within a week of landing in Africa. His younger brother and sister were driving to attend the *Jura de la Bandera* (oath to the colours) of the new recruits on the parade-ground outside the town where they lived. They bought a morning paper and read in it the news of their brother's death, "which he gloriously met in the endeavour to save a wounded private." Their father, who was an army doctor, was away from home; their mother, an invalid suffering from heart trouble, never read a paper. The two poor children, for they were nothing more, determined to conceal from her what had happened until their father's return. He meanwhile, to break the blow, telegraphed to her that their Antonito was wounded, and she jumped to the conclusion that he was bringing the young man home to be nursed, and for three mortal days Julian and Adelita kept their secret and watched their mother preparing the bedroom and making cooling drinks and strengthening broths for the boy who was already in his grave.

My girl, who was a great friend of theirs, told me that Adela and her brother broke down completely when they were with her and out of their mother's sight, but they contrived somehow or other to pull themselves together and bear brave faces before her, even when she called them straight from the condolences of sympathetic friends in the *cancela* to ask their opinion of this or that arrangement she had made for the comfort of their lost brother. They thought that their father, being a doctor, would know how to tell her what had happened without danger to her health, when he came home, and that gave them strength to play their parts.

Poor children and poor mother! When on the third day the cab drove up and the father got out alone, Doña Ramona needed no telling of the truth. She cried out, "My son is dead! I knew it all the time," and fell fainting on the floor. And even then Adela and Julian subdued their own grief, while they helped to carry her upstairs and lay her on the bed which she did not leave again for many weeks.

And here I should like to tell another little story, also of brave self-restraint in the face of death, though of a different character.

Whatever may be the attitude of certain classes of Spaniards towards their religion and their priests, it is certain that most ladies of gentle birth believe implicitly in the dogmas and teaching of their Church. And of these one tenet of the truth of which they are absolutely convinced is that a soul which leaves the body unshriven will suffer doubly in purgatory, unless Supreme Unction is omitted owing to wilful obstruction on some one else's part. In such a case the one who interferes with the last rites must bear the penalty, which here, in the belief of a strict Catholic, amounts to little less than eternal damnation.

A girl friend of mine saw her mother suddenly struck down with pneumonia, and the doctors told her that the case was quite hopeless, and that death must supervene within three days. None of the family had had the slightest idea that there was any danger, and when Rosa returned to the sick-room after hearing the verdict, her mother reproached her for being so long away.

"I heard you talking," she said; "who were you with, and what was all the conversation about?"

"It was the—the—laundress," said Rosa, "you know how careless she is."

Her great-aunt, a stern old lady who ruled Rosa and her sister with a rod of iron, here called the girl out of the room.

"Not a moment must be lost," she said. "We must immediately send for the priest, lest your mother should suddenly die without the Holy Oils."

And now Rosa, a plump, placid, and hitherto seemingly characterless person, showed what filial love is capable of. I will finish the story in her own words, as she related it to me a few months later.

"I knew that if the priest came it would frighten my mother terribly. She was not at all frightened then, and was she to spend her last days on earth in a state of panic? 'I will not send for the priest,' I told my great-aunt, for it was *my* duty to send in the absence of my father, because I was the elder of the children and a nearer relation than my great-aunt. She was very angry. 'You know what this means?' she asked, and I said 'Yes.' I knew what my punishment would be, and I was willing to remain for ever in purgatory to spare my mother the fear and pain of knowing that she must leave us all. I was very frightened, but I would not give way, and my father is a free-thinker, so when he came home he said I had done well. But after my mother was dead (she died quite peacefully, thinking she was only falling asleep) my conscience troubled me very much, and I went and told what I had done to our confessor. And he was very gentle to me. He said: 'Child, there are moments when what seems a mortal sin is only a lesser sin.' And he gave me only a little penance, for he said he knew I had suffered very much."

I am generally very careful to refrain from expressing any sort of opinion regarding the rites and rules of a religion which is not my own; but on this occasion I forgot myself. I told Rosa she had behaved nobly, and kissed her on both cheeks as heartily as if I had been a Spanish lady. With immense difficulty I had induced the father and the terrible great-aunt to let Rosa come with me to the seaside, for she had been ailing ever since her mother's death, and it was considered impossible for her to leave the house in her own town, even for the walks which the doctor had recommended as necessary exercise.

"Dear Doña Elena, you are too good to me," she said, returning my embrace with effusion; "how glad I am Papa let me come to stay with you. Paz and I were both getting so dreadfully fat sitting indoors all day, and oh! so *triste*. My mother liked society and amusement, as you know, and she took us out every day to the Promenade or to pay visits, and now we can never go out at all, except to Mass, and we were getting fatter and fatter. Paz has her *novio*, but I had nothing to distract me till you brought me here. If it were not for my dear Papa I should like to stop with you all the summer."

Her "dear Papa" was a distinguished-looking man who earned a good income in a Government office, but having perpetrated a poem or two when younger, went through life posing as a soul astray in a desert of uninteresting fact. He wore rather long hair thrown back from his forehead in picturesque disarray. The picturesqueness was, however, somewhat discounted by my simple Rosa, who, seeing a bottle of a favourite Spanish hair-wash on my table, naïvely observed—

"My Papa is using this. His hair has got thin on the top of his head, and he is so worried about it! Do you think this stuff is any good? Paz and I take turns to rub it on his scalp every night for half an hour before he goes to bed, but I don't see much difference."

"My Papa" was by no means a disconsolate widower. While the women of the family carry their mourning to the exaggerated lengths I have described, the men resume their usual habits a very short time after the funeral. Thus Papa's daughters would often have to sit up very late at night to attend to his hyacinthine locks before he went to bed, but they took it all as a matter of course, and would have been extremely surprised had I hinted that Rosa's delicate health and over-strained nerves might be a sufficient excuse for her release from these nocturnal duties. This is another aspect of the Oriental tradition—the inability of both men and women to realise that the husband or the father has not the right, simply because he is the husband or the father, to demand from his women-folk the service of slaves at all hours of the day or night, regardless of their convenience, happiness, or health.

When their mother had been dead a year, and Rosa and Paz had recovered their natural spirits and were ready to enjoy life again, their father had an attack of influenza, and both the girls got into a panic lest they were to be left doubly orphaned. He was not seriously ill, but very sorry for himself, and for months afterwards, whenever he caught the slightest cold or felt the least little indigestion, he would come home from his office and go straight to bed, and then he expected both his daughters to be ready to wait upon him. Paz always had to prepare his meals, because she knew better than the cook how he liked them flavoured; and Rosa had to be on hand to sit with him, read to him, and generally anticipate his every requirement. And as they never knew when he might feel unwell and come home to bed, and as he, of course, never dreamed of sending them notice beforehand from his office, it ended in his daughters literally never daring to go out at all after lunch.

I was shocked when I discovered the life they were leading. The *novio* of Paz had broken off the engagement, nominally because she could not pay her weekly duty calls on his mother, who was a stickler for etiquette and had no sympathy with "my Papa's" hypochondria, and the only gleam of brightness on the poor girls' horizon was the appearance of a lover for Rosa, the quiet one of the sisters, who had never attracted attention like handsome Paz. It was quite useless to ask them out, to suggest their taking turns in keeping Papa company, to make impromptu calls on the way to cinematographs or theatres on the chance of finding them free. Papa always either had just gone to bed or was just expected home to dinner; their duty to him had become an obsession, and the obsession was encouraged by him from purely selfish motives, and by the old aunt because in her view the girls would be committing a grave breach of decorum in going into society so soon (well over a year!) after their mother's death. And worst of all, papa, from pure jealousy, objected to Rosa's lover and forbade him the house, professing to have discovered that his means were uncertain, and announcing that he had no intention of spending his own hard-earned money on the support of an idle son-in-law.

But for once Papa met his match. The lover was neither idle nor impecunious, but a man of strong character and good position, and he was genuinely attached to our placid Rosa. So one fine morning the lovers met at Mass, and got married after a fashion peculiar, I believe, to Spain.

Just before the Mass ended they stepped forward, declared themselves man and wife, and asked for a blessing on their union. The priest may object, but he cannot refuse, for he must pronounce the benediction after saying Mass, and that serves as the blessing which sanctions these stolen marriages.

So Rosa went away with her husband and was happy, and soon fined down to her normal soft but shapely plumpness, while poor Paz stayed at home and pandered to her father until she came to weigh something like two hundredweight.

I met her quondam *novio* shortly after Rosa's marriage, and gently reproached him for deserting the girl whom he had "pretended to" for so long.

"Don't blame me," he said; "it's all her father's fault for not letting her take enough exercise to keep her fat down. I am not tall (he was about five feet high, a slim little pocket Adonis), and I haven't the courage to make myself ridiculous by marrying a woman who will make two of me before she is thirty."

I could not help feeling that there was something to be said on his side; but once again the cruel results of this branch of Spanish etiquette became apparent. If Paz had been able to lead a natural life, walking by day and dancing by night, as she did while her mother was living, she would not have lost either her figure or her lover, for before they went into mourning she and Rosa were among the merriest and most active of all the girls in their set. And now one can anticipate for her no brighter future than to be the maiden aunt to Rosa's children, a sort of household drudge and mother's help for life;—beloved, it is true, by the nephews and nieces, who will regard her with an affection almost if not quite equal to that bestowed on their mother herself, but always just "my aunt," a woman in a subordinate position, given a home for the sake of her services as nurse while the children are young, and as duenna when the girls grow up. She will always be cheerful and philosophical, for Paz is made that way, and she will always be practical and helpful in the house. But she will be an old maid, a good wife spoiled, and she will feel it to the end. And all because when she was yet in her teens she was compelled to sit indoors for a year after her mother's death, and therefore grew so fat that her lover was frightened away. Poor Paz! She is one of many victims to a ridiculous and indefensible custom and a mistaken sense of duty.

CHAPTER XI

Entertaining in town and country—Critical guests—A subscription ball—*Le dernier cri* from London—Dancing in a bog—Why the ladies went home—The search for Spanish gaiety—A disappointed artist—Afternoon calls—Arab hospitality—Ladies at work—Spanish unpunctuality—A new winter coat—Maria's compliment—Open house to old servants—Carmen the *cigarrera.*

It does not cost much to entertain in Spain, at any rate in the smaller towns. In the large towns things are otherwise, and it may be as well to begin by relating an incident that I heard of in connection with some very pleasant friends who lived in one of the "capitals," which means the chief town of the great provinces into which Spain is divided. Here there is a great deal of *cursileria*—a slang term best translated as "snobbishness"—and as every lady who gives a party wishes to spend more than any other lady, and as pride is everywhere more plentiful than pesetas, little hospitality is shown to or by people who are not rich.

An heiress had married the head of an old and noble family who himself possessed hardly anything beyond the family estate in Castile. Just when her eldest girl put on her first long frock and was about to be presented at Court, my friend lost almost all her money through some unfortunate

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speculation on the part of her husband—for the husband, be it observed, is absolute master of his wife's property in Spain. After the first shock the Condesa removed to a smaller house, and arranged her mode of life to suit her altered circumstances, while the Conde, a Colonel in the King's Guard, went to Madrid as usual to fulfil his duty at Court.

One of the things saved from the wreck was a grand piano, for the Condesa was a first-rate musician, and on Salud's eighteenth "name-day" a party was arranged with the double object of "offering the new house" to their large circle of acquaintance, and giving the girl a little amusement at home, since it was now out of the question for her to have a season at Madrid. The three daughters set to work and made paper flowers—a pretty accomplishment in which Spanish ladies excel—and garlands of leaves to adorn the patio. The Condesa herself superintended the preparation of various dainty little refreshments for her guests, and everything on the eventful night was as bright and attractive as good taste and willing hands could make it.

But there were no ices, no champagne, no set supper, and no band, the girls of the house taking turns to play endless *seguidillas*, *rigodones*, and valses for their guests. And when the dance was over and the Condesa and her daughters stood in the patio saying good-bye to those whom they had done their best to entertain, they heard one aristocratic dame remark to another of her kind—

"Were you ever before invited to anything quite so shabby? Really, if Maria de las Nieves could not afford something better than that, she had no business to invite us at all!"

But this specimen of aristocratic courtesy was displayed in a "capital," and things fortunately are very different in more out-of-the-way places.

In these I have seen young people meet together to talk and laugh and dance for hours, quite satisfied with no more costly refreshment than a bottle of water with a single glass from which they all drank in turn; while a lady who held weekly receptions to which we were invited once for the whole year, was regarded as quite a liberal hostess because she provided weak coffee and biscuits *ad lib.*

It was in a country town that I had the pleasure of attending my first and only subscription ball in Spain. The King's approaching marriage had brought everything English very much into fashion, and we were received on entering the theatre, where the ball was held, by the young gentleman who had got us the tickets, dressed as a Pierrot but wearing a bowler hat from Christie's, whose label was displayed by an ingenious turn of the hand as he led me into the dancing-room, otherwise the auditorium of the theatre.

It was Carnival, and most of the dancers were in fancy dress. The place was prettily decorated, and the boxes and dress circle were crowded with spectators. All the elder ladies were wearing black or white mantillas or Manila shawls, and one ought to have received an impression of smartness or even of elegance. But something was wrong somewhere to our English eyes, and instead of admiring the *coup d'œil* one cast about to see why one felt as if one had accidentally intruded upon a festivity in Whitechapel.

"Will you dance with me?" asked the Pierrot of a girl of our party, who, by the way, wore a realistic beggar's dress, all red and yellow rags, which her Spanish friends thought very absurd because it had cost only a few pesetas. And as the couple moved off together I suddenly discovered why the scene reminded me of a London coster dance. Every young man and many of the old ones wore a hat—generally a bowler—and even if he took it off to valse, which not many of them did, he carried it carefully under his arm as he danced, regardless of the inconvenience to his partner.

"What do you think of our ball?" asked an acquaintance, who was smoking a cigarette as well as wearing his hat.

I was tactless enough to say that it looked odd to us to see so many hats about, and I noticed that the young man's face fell. I learnt afterwards that the bowler from Christie's was believed to be absolutely the *dernier cri* in England, and that being so, it was considered as appropriate to the ballroom as to the street.

The entertainment was got up by the rank and fashion of the town, so everybody behaved with great dignity, and there was none of the rollicking fun we expected to see at a Carnival ball. The ladies in the boxes continually threw serpentinas and confetti at the dancers, until the floor was inches deep in them, and an Irish girl in our party said she felt as if she was dancing in one of her native bogs. But no one got excited, and an English artist on the look out for local colour began to bewail the absence of the light and life that he had believed inseparable from Spanish society.

A little before 1 a.m. there was a universal move towards the centre of the theatre, and at a given signal the heavens seemed to open and a mass of paper flowers, confetti, and bonbons concealed behind the garlands draping the ceiling, showered down on our heads, while a number of white pigeons were let loose and flew about in terror; but still nobody got excited. When this was over the Pierrot in charge of our party called the eldest of the Englishmen aside and asked him to take his ladies home, "because other ladies would be coming now"—a gentle hint, on which all the English and most of the Spanish dames hastily took their departure. The artist was the only one of us who stayed, hoping that with the advent of the "other ladies" he might see something of the celebrated animation which he wanted to introduce into his pictures of Spanish life. He told us next day that he had stopped till 4 a.m., and then came home escorted by half the Spanish army and all the Spanish navy—as represented at the ball—most of them rather and some of them very drunk, but solemn to the last.

"Spanish gaiety is a fraud," he indignantly declared, and departed in dudgeon, shaking the dust of our town off his feet.

But when I came to know more of Spanish

society I understood why all the ladies and many of the men were so solemn on that occasion. Being at a subscription and thus a semi-public ball, they considered that it would be *infra dig.* to show that they were amused. I never went to another such dance, for I prefer natural fun among young people at a party, but I would not have missed that one for the world; it was so delightfully unlike anything else of the kind one had ever seen.

Afternoon calling in Spain is very different from the quarter-of-an-hour duty visit or the formal leaving of cards which is customary in England—or was when I left my native country ten years or so ago.

Here it is a serious matter for those who have any sort of occupation, for one is expected to stay never less than an hour, and indeed your intimate friends are hurt if you don't remain the whole afternoon.

It is absolutely contrary to etiquette to go out when you have visitors, no matter how important an engagement you may have made before the uninvited guests appeared. I have known friends fail to arrive when expected to a ceremonious dinner at our house, and the all-sufficient reply to my reproaches has been, "I was very sorry, but what was I to do? We had visitors."

This exaggerated regard for the duties of hospitality in your own house, coupled with a calm disregard of any obligation imposed by an engagement to visit your neighbours, is another of the innumerable survivals of Arabic tradition, and as such must be respected by all who would enjoy the friendship of Spaniards. It is stronger in the south than in the north, where the Oriental influence was comparatively ephemeral and made no lasting impression on the natives. And it is even said that in Barcelona the Catalans sometimes turn up punctually when they have made a business engagement. This, I am credibly informed, is one of the causes, as well as an effect, of Cataluñan prosperity. But the Catalans are reputed to make a boast of their virtues, and this ridiculous regard for punctuality and the rest is one of their many offences in the eyes of *e.g.* the Andalucians, who are to the Catalans as oil to water, and never will agree with them on any single question to the crack of doom.

The extraordinary indifference of Spaniards to fixed hours and previously made engagements caused me no little trouble in connection with the photograph facing the head of this chapter. I wanted to take a pretty group formed day after day by the friends with whom I was staying, as they sat at work in their charming old patio, with some small nieces playing about them, and a typically Spanish air of ease and comfortable *néglige* pervading the whole scene. So I asked them to be in their usual rocking-chairs on a certain day, fixed by themselves, and arranged with the photographer to come at three o'clock on that afternoon, this being the time when my friends were always sitting there with their needlework, and the one hour in the whole day when the light in the patio, which was shadowed by a large orange tree, admitted of successful photography.

At three o'clock the patio was empty, save for a baby niece and her nurse. The girls, I was told, were dressing for the occasion. At three-thirty the photographer came. By that time the baby niece, badly bored, had begun to cry, and she continued to cry until at last she had to be taken away. She was a pretty baby, and I did not want to lose her from the picture. At four o'clock, when the light in the patio was already bad, the girls at last appeared, not, as had been arranged, in their everyday dresses prepared to sit down for a couple of hours' needlework, but in the costume of peasant girls got up for the fair, and quite obviously ladies in fancy dress. Nor was this the only disappointment to a writer who wanted a picture of Spanish ladies at home, for the sight of the camera had attracted all the children of my friends' friends within range, and I was told by my hostess that great offence would be given if they were not allowed to figure in the photograph.

As it was evidently useless now to attempt to get the sort of group I wanted, I gave way with such grace as I could command. The weeping baby was brought back, still weeping and refusing to be comforted even by some artificial flowers offered by its mother, who had put on a beautiful Manila shawl as an appropriate garment for sewing in the patio. The children from over the way planted themselves as seemed good to them, and the grown ladies settled themselves as the photographer recommended. When all was ready half an hour or so later, the sun went behind a cloud, the baby gave an extra howl, my particular friend stepped out of focus, and the photograph was of course hopelessly spoiled.

When the superfluous children had run away thinking it was all over, and most of the ladies had taken their leave, the sun reappeared, and the photographer hastily snapped the two prettiest girls, with the baby's mother pretending to be the nurse of the elder nieces, who yawned violently and informed us that their dolls had gone to sleep.

All things considered, I think the result was fairly good, but it is not a picture of Spanish ladies sitting at home with their sewing in the reposeful attitudes characteristic of the land where one hour is as good as another. I gave that up after wasting a whole afternoon and a certain amount of money in the manner here described. Neither the ladies nor the photographer seemed at all concerned at the fiasco, nor were the former at all contrite at having caused it by their unpunctuality. Indeed one of them, adding insult to injury, informed me that if I had had Señor Fulano instead of Don Mengano to take those photographs I should have obtained better results. And I think it should be counted to me for righteousness that I refrained from pointing out what admirable pictures my photographer produced when he had not to deal with society ladies.

The subjects of conversation at these friendly sewing parties are apt to be somewhat limited in scope, but one that never fails to please is dress in all shapes and forms.

The day after the photograph fiasco was the saint's day, or name-day, of Maria de las Mercédés, one of the two señoritas pretending to be a peasant at the well in the patio. And in the afternoon I was invited to eat cakes and drink wine, and be introduced to various callers who had come to offer the usual congratulations. Mercédés had received, as a name-day present from her brother, a new winter coat of the latest fashion, and first she had to put it on to exhibit to every woman and girl who called, and then every girl who called had to take the coat and try it on for herself. How they could do this I can't imagine, for it was a blazing hot day of St. Martin's summer, and in deference to a lady who had a cold we were all together in a small sitting-room with the windows shut. But one after the other of Mercédés' young friends slipped into the garment, studied her appearance in the mirrors with which every Spanish sala is plentifully provided, suggested improvements in this or that detail, and invariably ended by asking how much the coat cost and telling the owner that it was a wonderful bargain.

If the señoritas had brought gifts themselves, there might have been some excuse for their insatiable curiosity as to the price of the brother's present; but no: on Spanish name-days (which are equivalent to our birthdays) it is the heroine of the day who makes offerings, represented by cakes and wine, instead of receiving them. I trust that my readers will not cry "enough of King Charles's head" if I again remark that this is an Oriental tradition, just as many of the cakes themselves are made after Oriental recipes.

The custom of asking the price of whatever they admire is universal here, and is not in the least considered bad manners. The first Spanish lady whose acquaintance we made in Spain asked us what we were paying at the hotel we were staying at. When we took a house we were always asked what rent we paid, and when finally we bought the house in which we hope to end our days, all our Spanish friends asked us what the price was, and held up their hands in congratulatory amazement, exclaiming, "How cheap!" It is always a compliment to say you have made a good bargain, and if you wish to annoy, you have only to remark, "How they have cheated you!"

An old servant who lived with us for a good many years hoarded all her wages and spent nothing beyond the "tips" she received from visitors. To my certain knowledge she never bought a new dress for herself all the time she was with us, but wore my cast-off clothes when doing her work, and a brown, or as she called it, "Carmelite" cloth skirt, given her by a visitor, for Mass and the street, year in year out, until some one else gave her a blue serge which she turned and made to look like new. She was under a vow from her childhood never to wear any colour out of doors but brown, in honour of Our Lady of Carmel; but the vow somehow slipped into the background when she received the blue serge, and this will probably last her till she dies, for she is well over seventy.

This old lady, the first time she saw me in a new (and rather expensive) dress, came up and fingered the silk very carefully, and walked round and round me with expressions of enthusiastic admiration, such as—

"Señora, how beautiful! How handsome you are in your new costume! Never have I seen you look so well and so fat!" (As in the East, stout women are greatly admired here.)

And to finish up with, she said—

"Señora, the material is excellent. What did you pay for the dress, and where did you get it? To-morrow I shall go to the shop and buy myself just such another!"

I am afraid I did not receive this proposal with enthusiasm; but after a while I became used to talk of the kind, for I discovered that old Maria had no more idea of copying my clothes than she had of making a trip to England, and merely intended to suggest that sincerest form of flattery which is found in imitation.

I have met with many odd incidents showing how in certain ways the most complete familiarity prevails between master and servant, although in others there is a gulf fixed which seems to be impassable.

Servants, male and female, who have been engaged in a house even for a short time, especially in the country, are made more or less free of it for the rest of their lives. They may go away to other situations, or marry and set up their own homes, but always when they come to see their former mistress they walk in as if the house belonged to them, and are treated as if they had a perfect right to be there. A laundress or charwoman will arrive with three or four small children at her heels, and these will sit about in the laundry or the patio all day, while the mother does her work. I am bound to say that the little things generally behave very well, being trained in the hard school of necessity, and as soon as they can walk and talk they begin to run errands for the household. They soon become useful in this way, for errands are innumerable here. Save in big country houses which depend largely on their own farms and fruit gardens for provisions, it is the exception to have a storeroom, and every pennyworth of household sundries, down to salt, pepper, and spices, is bought from day to day. As no attempt is made to furnish a list of requirements for the day's meals when the cook goes to market, every item used in the cooking has to be got when it is found to be wanted—a system which accounts for much of the unpunctuality of meals in Spanish houses, and for the resultant national tendency to various forms of dyspepsia.

This of course does not apply to the poor, whose food is of the simplest. They eat bread and *morcilla* or *chorizo* (varieties of dried sausage highly flavoured with garlic) for their lunch, and *puchero* or *cocido*—of which more later on—for their dinner. In the towns they buy everything by the day, like their employers. But in the country they largely live on what they grow themselves, unless the whole family is engaged on the farm at a wage which includes food. And they thrive on bread, *morcilla*, and water, not even coffee being drunk by country cottagers, as I have discovered when accepting their hospitality on my archæological excursions. Thus they have no need to be continually running to the *comestibles* shop, like their town friends, which is just as well when the nearest town may be anything from two to ten miles away.

To return to the manners of Spanish servants. I was sitting one evening with friends over the after-dinner coffee when a picturesque creature in a purple garment of penitence, with a white handkerchief on her head, and a pair of twins in her arms, strolled in to tell the family that she had had a letter from her brother, a soldier in Morocco. They were all obviously interested, and while I listened to their sympathetic inquiries about the young man's health and happiness, I finished my coffee and handed my cup for a fresh supply. The bearer of the twins broke off short in her talk on noticing that I refused sugar.

"Is it possible that the Señora drinks coffee without sugar? Never have I heard of such a thing. Is it not very unpleasant to the taste?"

And then and there she shifted both babies on to one arm, took the unused spoon from my saucer, dipped it into my cup, and proceeded to try for herself what coffee without sugar tasted like.

I had much ado to refrain from laughing, the woman's simple unconsciousness of offence was so funny. One of my friends asked me in English—

"What do you think of Spanish impudence?" but no one else took any notice.

This particular act was unusual, because everybody takes sugar in their coffee, so that few opportunities arise for a servant to sample the unsweetened coffee in her master's cup. But the licensed familiarity that underlay it is widespread.

Sometimes, however, an excess of familiarity brings about condign punishment, as in a case that occurred in the hotel in which we stayed on our first arrival in Spain.

I was alone in our little sitting-room one day, strumming on a guitar, when the door suddenly opened and in marched a large blowsy woman with big black eyes, a wilted rose in her hair, and a cigarette in her mouth. She plumped herself down on the only easy-chair in the place, took the guitar from my unresisting hands, remarked "I can play better than *that* at any rate!" and struck up the twanging chords which preface every south-Spanish song.

It was perfectly true that she played better than I did, though that was not saying much, for she could hardly have played worse. And I was so much amused at her calm assurance that I just sat and laughed, while she twanged the guitar and beat on the floor with her slippered foot preparatory to bursting into song. But the concert was quickly brought to an end by the entrance of an indignant chambermaid, who seized the guitar and soundly cuffed the guitarist with an *Anda! Vete tu!* ("Go! Get out!") full of wrath and indignation.

"She seems fond of music," said I deprecatingly, for the whole scene had been as good as a play to me.

"Fond of music! *Ca!*" retorted the chambermaid. "She's the washerwoman, and she's drunk!"

Further inquiry elicited that the washerwoman was a *cigarrera* by profession—hence the cigarette, for respectable women in Spain do not smoke. And her name was Carmen! Shades of Bizet and his "toreador"! Alas! The landlady dismissed her next morning, and I never had another scene from that play enacted before me. Incidentally I may remark that drunkenness among women is extremely rare in Spain, and I can only remember coming into direct contact with one other old lady the worse for *aguardiente* in all the years I have lived here.

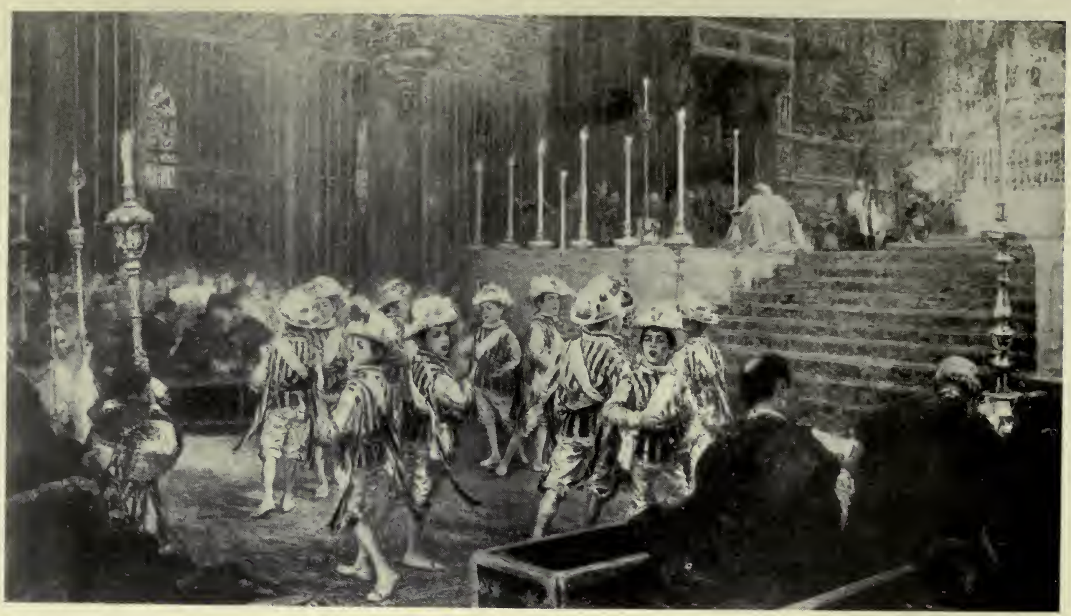
PART III.—WINTER

CHAPTER XII

A December festival—The "Mystery"—A holy war—The story of the *Seises* and their Dance—The Triduum of Carnestolendas—The real Don Juan—The Dancers of Corpus Christi—The defeat of Don Jaime de Palafox—The Christmas Ship—Marzapan and *Polvorón*—The Cock's Mass on Christmas Eve—"Nativities"—The midnight "lunch" in the mansion—The "Good Night" of the poor.

PROBABLY every one who takes any interest at all in Spain has heard of the famous Dance of the Seises before the high altar of Seville Cathedral on certain festivals, *i.e.* that of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady in December, the Carnival in February, and Corpus Christi in June. But no one either in Spain or out of it can give definite information with chapter and verse about the origin of the dance, still less of the name.

In Spanish the word *seises*, plural of *seis*, means "sixes," and it is usual to conclude that the name was given because six little boys performed the curious old-world movements known as the "dance." But as a matter of fact ten little boys take part, and one seventeenth-century writer speaks of twelve and another of seven, and although my impression is that these two figures were slips of the copyists,



THE DANCE OF THE SEISES IN SEVILLE CATHEDRAL.

(From the picture by Gonzalo Bilbao. By permission of the owner, the Earl of Rosebery, K.G.)

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there is no evidence that the number ever was precisely six, as it must have been for that to be the origin of the name. It looks, therefore, as if the assumption that *seises* here means sixes (and why not Six instead of Sixes as if they were dice?) were one of those hasty philological generalisations based upon sound alone which constantly crop up to puzzle the conscientious historian.

Those who pin their faith to the obvious translation of the word as written to-day, suggest that originally there were only six dancing boys, and that the other four were the attendants of the Archbishop, placed by way of ornament at the four corners of the carpet on which the dance takes place—and a very beautiful old carpet it is, by the way. But here we meet with the objection that, whereas the corner boys are the tallest of the ten, those who attend the Archbishop are the smallest, and moreover that two and not four follow in his train. To us who know how great is the force of tradition in southern Spain, it is inconceivable that the Dean and Chapter, or the Archbishop, or even the Pope himself, should arbitrarily and for no apparent purpose, at a time which is not stated in any record, have added four more to the six boys whose number is supposed to have given the name to their dance. Nor is it probable that this particular dance should have been made numerically more important when all over Christendom the religious dances of the Middle Ages were dying out or were being deliberately suppressed by the Church.

The most rational explanation appears to be that of a friend of mine, a distinguished Orientalist, who propounded a theory that the dance is a survival of the Mozarabic ritual, and that the little "Seises" were originally the *sais*, or attendants on the priests, at the time when Arabic was the only language used in Seville, not only by the Moslems in their mosques, but by the Arabicised Christians who maintained their own forms of worship although they had forgotten their own tongue. Two little *sais* are seen in one of the illuminations of the *Cantigas* of Alfonso the Wise (1252) in attendance upon a priest who is worshipping the image of Our Lady of the See (*Sede*—now over the high altar in the Cathedral), and they were provided with rations and education by a Bull of Pope Eugene IV. in 1438. But nowhere do we find any mention of their number, as we could hardly fail to do had it been limited to six; whereas nothing would seem more natural than the conversion of the Arabic *sais* into the Spanish *seis*, when Castilian was made the language of reconquered Andalucia by law of Alfonso the Wise.

But for the loss of the deeds and archives relating to the faithful Mozarabs of this diocese and their metropolitan Church of Saint Mary during the troubled half-century between 1200 and the reconquest in 1248, we might have known something about the true origin of the Seises, of the mediæval fresco of "Our Lady of the Old Time," and others of Mozarab tradition, of the celebrated Guilds and Brotherhoods which come out in procession in Holy

Week, and of other curious details of Sevillian ritual touched upon in a later chapter.

I will take the festivals enlivened by the Dance of the *Seises* in their order, beginning with the Octave of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin (to give the feast its full official title), for this not only comes first in point of time, its vigil being on 7th December, when winter weather has hardly yet begun in this favoured clime, but it is in point of fact the greatest festival in the whole ecclesiastical year in Seville, which city from first to last was the self-constituted champion of this "Mystery."

No one seems to know when the belief that Mary as well as her Son was born without human agency first began to gain ground in Seville, but Don Manuel Serrano, who has spent most of his life in the study of Sevillian Church history and art, believes he has evidence that her "sinless birth" was venerated from the fourth century onwards, and that St. Isidore, the "learned doctor" of Seville, found it in the primitive rite and transferred it to his own liturgy not very long before the Moslem invasion. And since the Isidorian or Sevillian ritual (*Rito hispalense*) was the one used here by the Mozarabs throughout the dominion of Islam until San Fernando replaced it by the Roman rite in 1248, Sevillian archæologists have some ground for claiming that this see was *par excellence* "the land of the Blessed Virgin" (*tierra de Maria Santisima*) throughout its chequered history. At any rate, some evidence in favour of their claim is that the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin does not figure in the Mozarab ritual of Toledo before the year 1300, whereas it seems to have been in full swing here in 1248, for Alfonso the Wise in his *Chronicle* refers to the use in Seville of the ritual of "Saint Isidre é de San Leadre" (SS. Isidore and Leander), which contains this feast.

The belief in the "Mystery" was by no means universally accepted after the re-conquest even in Seville, whatever may have been the case among the faithful Mozarabs, but feeling did not wax really hot over it until the seventeenth century. Then the Franciscans and Jesuits combined to work for its acceptance by the whole Church, while the Dominicans controverted it, and Seville took the lead in what became almost a holy war. Extraordinary acts of devotion were witnessed, among the most remarkable being the selling of himself back into slavery by a freed slave, who gave the price of his own flesh and blood to the cult of the "Most Pure." He and his fellow-negroes maintained an altar to the Conception in the church of Our Lady of the Angels, and it was for this that the freed slave desired to raise money. And a priest in an excess of ecstasy actually had the A.M. (Ave Maria) branded on his face.

The burning of a Dominican monastery was considered an intervention of Providence against those who "insulted" Our Lady by denying her miraculous birth, and it gave rise to serious rioting, only quelled at last by the ecclesiastical authorities placing over the door of the monastery the inscription, "Mary, conceived without sin." To this period of storm and stress are to be assigned the numerous repetitions of the monogram A.M. (Ave Maria) seen over the doors of old houses in almost every town and village in Andalucia and other provinces where the controversy raged, and from this century dates the addition of an image of the Virgin to almost every one of the Holy Week processions, with its accompanying banner called the *Sin Pecado*, because embroidered with those words in testimony to Mary's immaculate conception. And of this period too is a remarkable festival cope in the church of San Lorenzo at Seville, made of white brocade woven all over with the monogram A.M. and the initials S.P.O., so that on every fold it reads "Hail Mary! Born without original sin" (*Ave Maria, Sin Pecado Original*).

And now the ancient Dance of the Seises became one of the most brilliant features in the festival of the Conception. Hitherto, one gathers, no special pains had been bestowed upon the costumes of the boys, but in 1654 it was thought desirable to bring them "up to date." One would give a good deal to know how they were dressed before this, for probably the costumes were traditional and centuries old in style if not material. But the wealthy and pious Sevillians had then as now but scant regard for relics of the past. The Chapter which thought it a great deed to remove the robes in which San Fernando was buried in 1252 and replace them with the costume of their own day (in which costume the embalmed corpse of the great general and saintly monarch is still displayed to the gaze of his worshippers three times in every year)—such a Chapter would be incapable of seeing anything worth preservation in the dancing-boys' dress of, say, the thirteenth century. And they readily found a devout old couple to present a complete new set of "ornaments" for the festival of the Conception in the Cathedral, including costumes for the *Seises*.

The benefactors were Don Gonzalo Nuñez and his wife, Doña Mercia, who had recently returned from the Indies with a handsome fortune. He was old and crippled with gout and other ailments, but he was borne into the Cathedral on a carrying-chair to attend the octave of the feast from the 7th to the 14th of December 1654, and thus he was able to witness "the incredible delight of the entire city" at the splendid trappings provided for the popular ceremony by his own and his wife's munificence.

No less than 150,000 ducats, or £40,000 of our money, did the pious pair set aside to endow the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, "in order to make it as splendid as that of Corpus Christi," and they gave the money in their lifetime too, instead of bequeathing it by will so as to enjoy it themselves as long as they lived. There were new blue and white vestments for the priests, blue and white draperies for the pulpit, the reading-desk, and the Archbishop's throne, blue and white banners, even cushions of blue and white for the Archbishop to kneel on in the choir and before the high altar. Now for the first time the little boys were given vestments of blue and white, "colours of the

Mystery," and so comprehensive was the scheme laid down by the generous Don Gonzalo that, as the archive says, "even the Singing Children called Seises" had "all their borders and fringes of equal cost and richness" with those of the Dean himself.

Nor were women entirely left out in this endowment, for it was ordered that "certain poor maidens" should be provided with dowries out of the £40,000, and these maidens were to walk in the processions throughout the Octave clad to match the Seises in white robes and hooded mantles of blue, such as Murillo was depicting then in his representations of the Virgin. Doña Mercia for her part endowed the *Capilla de las Doncellas* (Chapel of the Maidens) in the cathedral, and here until recent years the dowries provided by her husband and herself were annually distributed, and here portionless girls even now go to pray for good husbands, although unfortunately most of the endowment funds mysteriously disappeared in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

One of the interesting details in this donation is the light it throws on the condition of the silk weaving industry of Seville in the seventeenth century. All the vestments, of whatever class, the altar and other hangings, the costumes of the Seises, and the dresses for the maidens, were to be "of the finest possible materials," and they were "to be woven for the purpose in the city of Seville, which in such weaving does not give place either to Milan or Naples." Such is the wording of the deed of gift. Had Don Gonzalo himself been a silk merchant we might have suspected prejudice in favour of his own manufactures; but not so, he had made his fortune as a general trader with the New World.

The silk industry of Seville dated from Arabic times, and appears to have been at its height in the eleventh century under the beneficent rule of the Abbadite kings, who brought civilisation and luxury here to a greater height than ever was attained in Cordova, always more distinguished for literature and science than for arts or industries. The Beni Abbad were Yemenite Arabs, and their family with many others of Yemenite descent (contrary to what is generally supposed) had peacefully established themselves side by side with the Christian natives in the eighth century. They had a full appreciation of the benefits of commerce and industry, for the Yemenites were not nomads like many other Arabs, but had developed, with the aid of their conquerors the Persians, a remarkable civilisation and art in their beloved capital, Sana, the traditional glories of which were still the theme of their poets several centuries after the Arab occupation of Spain. Thus we find in the silks, damasks, and brocades manufactured in Seville right down to the seventeenth century a curious Egypto-Persian influence in design, an influence which, strange to say, even now persists in the beautiful work done by Andalucian women, whether lace, embroidery, or drawn thread, and in the naïve traditional birds and beasts painted on the pottery of Triana. So characteristic are these designs that it is easy to recognise the Seville school of art from the earliest Arabic times down to the present day, while the productions of the seventeenth century can be dated with tolerable accuracy by a new feature which then appeared, as a result of the Sevillian devotion to the "Immaculate."

New, however, is hardly the correct word, for it had its root in the sacred lotus of Egypt, whose pointed leaves symbolised the flame of life, worshipped from prehistoric ages.

As far back as the thirteenth century this lotus or lily (*azucena*) had been adopted as their heraldic device by the knightly Order of Our Lady of Old Time, and in 1400 when they began to rebuild the Cathedral of Seville it was assumed as the heraldic arms of the Chapter. Now, in consequence of the general devotion to the "Mystery," the device became known as the "Heraldic Arms of the Virgin," and henceforth the jar or vase, with the two-branched lily springing from it, is ubiquitous in Andalucian design. The calix of the lotus flower turned into the vase, while the stamens and pistils grew into the two branches. Some artists indeed went so far as to paint the Virgin sitting on a water-lily with two stems, one of which had its root in the breast of St. Anna, her mother, and the other in that of St. Joachim, her father. We can hardly imagine that an idea so foreign to Western hagiology would have sprung up spontaneously after the Mozarab rite had been suppressed in favour of the Roman on the reconquest of Seville, whereas it would only be natural that the art of the Mozarabic Church should be influenced by Eastern ideas at the time when the members of that Church were in intimate contact with the Arabic civilisation and were practically isolated from the rest of Christendom. As for the Egyptian (or Coptic) tradition, the Yemenite Arabs would have brought it with them in the eighth century, when they came to Spain after their conquest of Egypt, and it would be reinforced by the close intimacy which existed in the eleventh century between the Fatimite Khalifs and the Abbadite court in Seville.

Thanks to Don Gonzalo Nuñez the celebration of the Immaculate Conception has been observed in Seville since 1654 with greater magnificence than anywhere else. The columns of the transepts and nave are draped from top to bottom with crimson velvet curtains, for which the merchants of Seville subscribed £17,000 towards the close of the century, the whole of the reredos and the high altar are covered with plates of chased silver, and the pyx is placed in a shrine of gold surrounded by a coronal of blazing diamonds, each as large as a small pea. This is raised high above the actual altar, and gleams dazzlingly through the dim light of the candles placed round it. When the bell rings for the Elevation, after the dance of the Seises is over, the red velvet curtains screening the Host are slowly drawn back; soft orchestral music fills the air; the Cardinal Archbishop steps forward to give the benediction, and the thousands of worshippers kneel in silent adoration. Then indeed one realises the extraordinary hold that the "Mystery" has taken upon the imagination of the people of Seville.

The little Seises, no matter what imps of mischief they may be at other times, comport themselves with great gravity on this occasion. Filled with honourable pride, convinced that their dance is the event towards which moves all the magnificent ritual of the whole Cathedral year, each small boy feels that everything depends on the perfection of his own performance. Should a single *Seis* err in the minutest detail, the whole stately dance would break up in confusion. For this "dance" is in truth a series of complicated arabesques traced by small feet upon a velvety carpet, each movement growing out of and depending upon those before and after. There are over two hundred musical settings, but there is only one rule for the dance, and a choir boy, however clever, has to practise it for a whole year before he can be promoted to the dignity of a *Seis*, the summit of his ambition. Indeed to be a *Seis* is something like winning a scholarship, for when he outgrows his costume and his voice begins to break, his future is taken care of by the Chapter, who train him for the priesthood if he has a bent that way, or apprentice him to some trade whereby he may eventually earn his living, unless, as frequently is the case, he be the son of parents able to give him a professional career.

Their dresses are still made after the seventeenth-century fashion, though somewhat modified, and, alas! no longer of "the best materials" to be obtained in Seville. The trunks of an earlier day have degenerated into knickerbockers down to the knee, but we still see the white shoes and the white stockings which once were trunk-hose, the round hats turned up at one side with feathers, doublets of white satin with strips of blue edged with gold, and streamers to match hanging from the shoulders, as once did the elegant cloaks of which these are the modest survival. For all the changes and diminished glories of their dress, the little Seises strike a ringing note from the past as they hurry across the broad aisle to the choir before their dance begins, eight of them passing along the railed-off gangway leading from the choir to the high altar, while the two smallest place themselves one on either side of the great carved reading-desk with its immense old missals, ready to take their place of honour behind the Cardinal-Archbishop when he moves from his throne to the altar. The tiny blue and white figures constitute an enchanting touch of childish insouciance among the sombre purples of the canons' robes and the rich brown of the carved cedar stalls, the top of which they can hardly look over, for they are only seven or eight years old; and they stand first on one foot and then on the other through the long vespers intoned by the choirmen and the beneficed clergy, trying in vain to behave as if they were big boys not at all tired by the drone of phone and antiphone over their small heads.

At last evensong is over and their moment of moments comes. Preceded by the *Pertiguero* with his silver wand of office, in tie-wig, wide falling collar, and sixteenth-century robe of black serge, the Chapter marches in solemn procession down the railed gangway from the choir to the high altar, the Cardinal-Archbishop in his magnificent scarlet robe with a *Seis* at each side bringing up the rear.

The dignitaries all kneel down beside broad wide-armed sixteenth-century chairs placed to the right at the foot of the altar steps, and remain on their knees throughout the dance; the orchestra strikes up and the Hymn of the Seises begins. It is never accompanied by the organ, but always by a string band composed of laymen, placed opposite the seats of the dignitaries, to the left of the altar steps. And this lay band suggests that the dance was initiated before organs were used in the primitive Spanish Church.

There is nothing Oriental either in the hymn or in the music of the dance which follows it; all is sweet, tender, and reverent as a religious ceremony performed by children in a church should be. But at the close of each couplet we are suddenly reminded of the East by the rattle of castanets held all this time hidden in the palms of the boys' hands, and now played by them with a mastery of crescendo and diminuendo, that shows how the castanets may be made instruments of music, not merely of rhythmical noise. Here strikes the note of tradition once again, for the castanets are Oriental and must have been introduced into the Cathedral service, like the dance itself, by the Arabicised Christians of Seville under Islam.

The hymn has two verses and the dance is gone through twice; then the ten little boys run lightly up the steps, five on either side of the altar, make their reverence to the Elements shut away from sight in the golden pyx above the image of "Mary most pure"—a fine sculpture in wood by Martinez

Montañes—and disappear into the sacristy at the back of that wealth of silver and brocade provided by the long-forgotten Don Gonzalo. But before the music of the Benediction begins half the congregation seated in the transept rise and hastily make their way to the Door of the Poles under the Giralda tower, for that is the way the Cardinal goes out to his palace across the square, and the pious Sevillians think an especial blessing will be their portion if they can intercept his passage and kiss his beautiful amethyst ring as he leaves the Cathedral after the Dance of the Seises in the Octave of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady.

The next time the boys dance is during the three days of Carnival, and if we ask why this very secular occasion be chosen, the archives of the Chapter give us the explanation.

In 1682 there died in Seville one Don Francisco de Contreras de Chaves, Knight of the Order of Santiago, Gentleman of the King, Familiar of the Holy Order of the Inquisition, and one of the *Veintecuatros* (twenty-four), an order of nobility granted to Seville and Seville alone, in the thirteenth century. This distinguished individual was distressed at the vain and worldly amusements indulged in during the *Carnestolendas* (the Latin *carnis tollendus*), which are the three days in which meat is eaten in preparation for the forty of abstinence beginning with Ash Wednesday; and he fondly hoped that by introducing the Dance of the Seises into the Cathedral services of those three days, the tide of profane entertainment might be stemmed. So he willed that after his wife's death all his "large fortune" should be bestowed on "the triduum of Carnestolendas" in order that these days should be celebrated in the Cathedral with as much pomp and magnificence as the Conception and Corpus Christi.

When his estate came to be cleared up it was found that thirteen thousand *pesos escudos de plata* (about £1260) were available for the purpose, and in testimony of gratitude to their generous benefactor the Chapter ordered all the minor clergy and dependants of "the holy House" to attend his funeral, half of them bearing yellow candles and half white, while the bier was covered with the pall used at interments of prebendaries. Further, a requiem Mass was celebrated in the church of San Francisco (now the Town Hall) where the defunct Inquisitor was buried, and the Chapter attended this in copes and birettas, and the Cathedral musicians sang the Mass, which was recited by three dignitaries, the sermon being preached by a fourth.

"In such wise," says a contemporary writer, "the Chapter did honour to Don Francisco de Contreras for having left all his fortune to improve the worship of God, from whom he will have received his reward."

Don Francisco died the same year as Murillo, but we are not told that the Chapter bestowed any such funeral honours upon him. Presumably they thought that having paid for his pictures they had done their duty by the artist, although he had devoted his life to the service of religion, painted thirty-two pictures of the Conception, and turned his back upon worldly honours and rewards lest he should offend the Holy Office by producing works other than religious.

The dresses provided for the Seises by the bequest of Don Francisco are of the same style and materials as those worn for the Conception, but where the latter are blue the Carnival garb is red, and these red and white costumes are worn also at Corpus Christi, which takes place early in June. There is, however, a notable difference between this ceremony and the two former ones, for whereas they take place within the Cathedral, that procession of Corpus goes out with the Host into the streets, passes the Town Hall where all the rank and fashion of the town assemble to receive it, on stands erected for the occasion, and makes a long round through the heart of the oldest part of Seville before returning with its sacred burden to the Mother Church.

The feast of Corpus Christi, although officially instituted in the thirteenth century, and probably a survival of one of those pagan ceremonies which the early Fathers, instead of quarrelling over, so wisely adapted to Christian worship, was not developed in its full splendour until 1613, and then the benefactor who endowed it was none other than that interesting historical character, Don Mateo Vazquez de Leca, Archdeacon of Seville, known in poetry and romance as "Don Juan."

The only child of wealthy parents who died when he was yet a youth, he became a priest and was given a high place in the Chapter at the early age of twenty-three. It was not to be wondered at that, as a contemporary puts it, "as his age was short and his rents were long, his steps were not so well balanced as his ecclesiastical state demanded." His palatial mansion indeed was conducted on lines more befitting a plutocrat than a priest, and his licentious life was the scandal of the town. But when he was thirty "Heaven pleased to warn him of the peril he was in," by a miraculous intervention which has been erroneously attached to the name of Don Juan Mañara, a contemporary of Murillo who gave much gold to the Hospital of the Caridad in Seville, and ordered "Here lies the worst man that ever lived," to be inscribed upon his tombstone in the church of the Hospital. Thanks to this exhibition of posthumous humility, the adventure of Don Mateo has been attributed by the romancists to Don Juan Mañara, instead of to the real hero, the Archdeacon, who really was a far more picturesque personality.

The year was 1600, the day that of the feast of Corpus Christi—and we need have no fear of error in the date, for the event figures in the archives of the Chapter. Don Mateo, more intent upon his personal elegance than his holy office, arrayed himself for the occasion in a beautiful brocade underdress, trusting that its brilliancy of silk and gold thread would gleam through the diaphanous silk of his soutane and the transparent lace of his rochet. For he had his mind and his eye fixed upon a mysterious lady whom he had observed of late among the congregation in the Cathedral, and he hoped his handsome face and richly clad figure might win her favour on this day of religious and secular cheer. All through the protracted ceremony in the Cathedral and the slow progress of the long procession, he contrived to keep her in view, and when at length he was free to divest himself of his ecclesiastical garb and go where he would, he found her waiting for him outside the sacred building, and immediately tried to address her.

But the lady was very coy, notwithstanding her coquettish glances at the Archdeacon during the ceremony, and when he approached her she moved away so fast that he could not obtain even a glimpse of her face beneath the long black veil wrapped round her head and shoulders, nor could he overtake her although he followed her all through the centre of the town, into the Macarena and out round the city walls until she led him back again into the Cathedral.

Within the building it was now twilight, for the whole afternoon had been consumed in the pursuit, and the lady flitted from chapel to chapel, and altar to altar, until at length she paused before that of Our Lady of the Old Time. Don Mateo trembled, for this image had always been his especial devotion. But the flesh after so many years of self-indulgence was too strong for the spirit. He clasped the lady in his arms, forgetful of the sacred spot on which he stood, and tore off her veil, intent on seeing the lovely features of the woman who had defied him so long. One word was breathed into his ear, like a sigh from another world.

"ETERNITY!" was the word he heard, and

down the long empty aisles it seemed to float away, only to rise again and roll out louder—louder until it sounded like thunder on the ears of the wretched priest.

And then with a horrible rattle of dry bones, the warm living body he held in his arms sank into a shapeless heap on the floor. That for which he had committed sacrilege was nothing but a withered and disintegrated skeleton.

From that moment the Archdeacon led a new life, and in his deep repentance he became the most devout of all the priests in the Chapter. He left his magnificent mansion and moved to a mean house in the alley of Santa Marta, under the shadow of the Cathedral; he devoted his whole fortune to pious and charitable uses; and he endowed with large rents for ever the feast of Corpus Christi, because on that day God had seen fit to rescue him from his life of sin. He gave for the feast no less than an hundred silver candlesticks, hangings and canopy for the high altar, and silver altars to carry in the procession through the streets. He gave a complete set of white vestments to be used only on that day, for all the Chapter, the minor clergy, the singers, musicians, and servants of the altar, including of course the Seises. He gave altar-frontals for the portable altars, hangings for the pulpit and the Cathedral cross, curtains for the silver shrine, and rich draperies for the platform on which the shrine with the pyx within is carried through the town. And he endowed the preachers, bell-ringers, illuminations, and procession—in short, everything relating to the festival, not excepting the Guild of Our Lady of the Pomegranate, which maintains an altar in the Chapel of la Granada (pomegranate) under the Giralda, and still preserves the weighty poles on which until recent times they carried the platform with the shrine, in the genuine old Arabic fashion.

From the earliest times the procession of Corpus Christi had been attended not only by the little Seises in their gala dress, but also by groups of men and women dancers similar in idea to the Giants and Bigheads which figure in the festival of Our Lady of the Pillar at Zaragoza, as described in Chapter XVII. These have now been suppressed for so long that few know what they once were, but I find a mention of the Giants in the year 1690, when the Civil Governor or *Asistente*, as he was then called, combined with the Archbishop, Don Jaime de Palafox, in a determined attempt to put down celebrations which they considered inconsistent with the dignity of the Church.

They knew very well that if the public became aware beforehand of what was intended it would be impossible to carry out their scheme, so nothing was said until six o'clock in the morning of the festival. Then the announcement was made that no group of Dancers should enter the Cathedral on pain of a fine of one hundred ducats for the leader of any such party, and fifty ducats and four years' imprisonment for the bearer of any one of their banners. But the Archbishop and the *Asistente* reckoned without their host, for although the people, stupefied by this unexpected interference with their immemorial rights, remained quiet as if stunned by the blow, the lawyers of the Town Council (which provided funds for the "Dancers") went straight to the Court of Justice, and presently the Archbishop was informed that he had no legal status in the matter, that the "Dancers" were immediately to take their accustomed places in the procession within the Cathedral, and the ceremony was to proceed in the usual order.

The Archbishop, furious at his authority being disputed, ordered that if the Dancers entered the Cathedral the procession should be at once withdrawn, and the Host in its magnificent silver *Custodia* (a replica in miniature of that erected in the "Monument" during Holy Week) should be taken back to its own place. But now the priests, friars, and other ecclesiastics turned against him, saying that they had been invited by the Chapter to attend the carrying forth of the Host among the people, and they could not leave the Cathedral until this sacred duty had been fulfilled.

Meanwhile the public, angry and disappointed, saddened by a quarrel over what they held sacred, and terrified lest the divine wrath should descend upon the city because the feast-day was not being honoured according to the ritual of their forefathers, collected in the Plaza de San Francisco, and clamoured for the procession to start, while the gentler and more timorous spirits knelt down all along the streets and prayed to God to remove the difficulties which had so suddenly and unexpectedly arisen.

At long last the Archbishop withdrew, his place being taken by a lesser dignitary, and the procession came out of the Cathedral with the Dancers in their usual places, followed by the Brotherhood of the Tailors (of whom more anon), the Capuchins, Mercenaries, Augustines, and Carmelite friars, the Tribunal of the Inquisition, the canons, and the *Asistente*, who could not dissimulate his indignation at the defeat of himself and the Archbishop, over which the whole town was rejoicing all along the route.

Don Jaime de Palafox then appealed to the King and the Pope, but all he got was an order that women should be excluded from the Dances and that no masks or other disguises should be worn by the Dancers in the Cathedral, no attempt being made to put a stop to the dances themselves, because "this kind of festival had always continued in Seville." The Archbishop was charged neither to impede nor to embarrass the entry of the Dancers into the Cathedral, and he got a rap over the knuckles from the King for having tried "to introduce novelties."

Don Jaime de Palafox was not the man to own himself beaten, and ten years later came the turn of the *Seises.* On June 18th of the year 1700 he got an order from the Pope to the Chapter to "suppress the abuse of the dances of the Seises," apparently thinking he would thereby put an end to that traditional performance. The Dean, however, was as stout a fighter as Don Jaime himself. He represented to the Holy Father that the Hymn and the Dance of the Seises could not be fairly judged of by hearsay but must be seen to be understood, and he reminded the Pope that the first principle of the Council of Trent was that no judgment should be given in any dispute until both sides of the case had been heard. He stuck to his point until he obtained permission to take the Seises, costumes, castanets, and all, to Rome to dance before the Pope, and the final result was that the dance remained a recognised part of the ritual of the Cathedral of Seville, and has been performed at its appointed seasons without intermission ever since.

Thus it survives to-day, to the pious delight of all good Sevillians. But, as said the chronicler of the attempt to suppress it, "Only he who sees it can comprehend it, and it is worth seeing. For it is performed with the greatest seriousness and composure, with the result that it is one of the most remarkable things in this Holy Church, very far removed from irreverence, but rather an example of an especial respect to the Lord."

About a week before *Noche Buena*—the Good Night—which is Christmas Eve, the grocers' shops in Seville blossom out into still-life pictures, generally with a huge ship of wicker-work as the centre, having oars of Bologna sausages, a great ham as a sail, and a cargo of gold in the shape of oranges. Silver is represented by Tangerine oranges wrapped in lead paper, and vacant corners are filled up with a variety of sweetmeats, while the rigging consists of tinsel streamers. A banner of the national colours, of more or less expensive silk, flies of course over the whole, and this "flagship" is flanked by a squadron of lesser fry in every shape and form, but always of wicker-work. The whole fleet and its constituent parts are offered for sale at exaggerated prices, and the crew in every case consists of one or more bottles of wine.

These baskets of provender are bought for Christmas gifts, and if we may judge from the absence of any special attractions in other shops, they are the most popular kind of present, except marzapan cakes. Of these the confectioners offer a considerable variety, the majority in the form of bulls or dragons, but some representing the beloved ham, which is so favourite an article of food, while some, but these are the minority, are made in pretty and artistic rounds, diamonds, or floral forms. All consist of the same rich almond paste, and all are adorned with preserved fruits and bonbons. Several varieties of a kind of nougat called *turrón* also appear at Christmas and on two or three other great festivals, and some of them are delicious.

The marzapan cakes, like the *turrón* and the baskets of groceries, are all very expensive, which is not surprising in a country where even the locally made beetroot sugar is so heavily taxed that the consumer has to pay 70 centimes a pound for it. Thus the above dainties are only for the rich. The Christmas cake of the poor is called *polvorón*, and consists of a curious dry substance like extra short short-cake, made chiefly of almond flour, sugar, and white of egg. The Christmas *polvorón* is a large round cake, about half an inch thick, and it generally has a preserved orange in the middle, into which an artificial flower is stuck. It is always sold on a cardboard tray, because its consistency is such that it would otherwise fall to pieces of its own weight. Although it costs a mere trifle compared to the marzapan and *turrón* eaten in well-to-do houses, it is nevertheless of excellent flavour.

Indeed I doubt whether the workers do not prefer their *polvorón* to marzapan, if only because they get so much more of it for their money. It is customary to give a cake to your servants for Christmas, and I recollect that on one occasion, when talking over a projected kitchen-party with my cook, she politely gave me to understand that much as they had enjoyed the beautiful marzapan dragon of the previous Christmas, they would really prefer a *polvorón* this time, as the same expenditure on that class of cake would allow all their friends to cut and come again, instead of being limited to a mere mouthful, as had been the case with the five-dollar dragon of last year.

Whatever be the cake you give to the *ménage*, the best part of it will be set aside to offer to the master and mistress and their family. If it be a bull, the head and horns will be kept; if a dragon, the head and tail; and on the evening after the servants' party, when your dinner is over, the cook will hastily don a white apron and knot her best silk handkerchief round her head, and will march into the dining-room bearing the remains of the cake with all its inedible decorations carefully rearranged to hide what has gone. This she will courteously offer to every one at table, pressing them to taste and see how rich a dish the Señores have provided for the delectation of those in their employ. And as often as not some talented member of the household will stand at the door meanwhile, and sing at the top of his or her voice an improvised couplet setting forth the generosity and amiability of his employers.

Of the actual giving of Christmas parties there is very little. Christmas trees are, of course, quite foreign to the soil, and I have never heard of a Christmas dance, outside of Madrid, save those given by foreign residents. But Christmas Eve is celebrated by high and low, and rich people at this time spend a good deal of money in what seems to us a singular and unpractical method of displaying their religious fervour. This consists in setting up a *Nacimiento* (Nativity), or representation of the birth of Christ, which is prepared in the private chapel of the house, if there is one, or in a principal reception-room, in as elaborate a form as the means of the family permit.

Even the poorest try to procure something of the kind for their children, and the necessary figures for it are sold in the streets and in the shops for a week or so before the great day, at prices varying from one centime to hundreds of pesetas. I have bought the whole scene modelled in coarse crudely painted clay by the vendor, for a peseta. The stable of such a *Nacimiento* has three little walls and no roof, the Virgin and St. Joseph kneel on either side of the Babe, two tiny plumes of pampas grass and some cocks and hens represent the rural surroundings which these artists imagine to be appropriate, and, regardless of the Bible story, the beloved St. John as a grown man will be found somewhere in the background. One cannot please a poor family more than by presenting them with a *Nacimiento* of this class. It will be set up in the place of honour on the chest of drawers, whose top is always devoted to their "saints"—appallingly bad images, as a rule—and family photographs; while, if the exiguous wages permit, one or more candles will be lighted in front of the treasure every night until the "Day of the Kings," which is our Twelfth Night, a far greater festival to Spanish children than Christmas or New Year's Day. And the smallest infant is taught that no sacrilegious finger is to be laid on the sacred toy.

The *Nacimientos* in rich houses are put up with an absolute disregard of cost (I remember seeing one of which a single figure cost £4), but the idea is the same—a plastic representation of the Nativity. Here, however, it is made the occasion of a social function, and it is curious to read in the papers on Christmas Day how a magnificent *Nacimiento* was set up over-night in the gorgeous chapel of the splendid mansion of the Dukes of Mengano or the Counts of Fulano, and how, after the Reverend Bishop of this or the learned Canon of that had read the Office and delivered an inspired address, the whole family adjourned to the dining-room at 1 a.m. and were regaled with "a succulent lunch," which was "made the more agreeable by abundance of *champán.*"

In this country the press reports of functions of this kind are not sparing in their adjectives. The accounts are paid for like any other advertisement, and the rich hosts of the "new" nobility like to have value for their money just as much as do the wealthy merchants and financiers. As for the old rural nobility, they are mostly too much reduced in fortune for display at Christmas or any other time, and if they are still well off, their tastes and traditions are averse from newspaper celebrity, so that reporters have little chance of getting inside their grave old houses, still less of obtaining fees for advertisements in the shape of adulatory narratives of their religious observances.

In Seville all old customs still keep an extraordinary hold on the popular imagination. Of these one of the most curious is a religious ceremony called the "Cock's Mass" (*Misa del Gallo*), which takes place on Christmas Eve. So strange is it and so archaic that at one time efforts were made to get the Pope to prohibit it; but the Franciscan Friars of the Monastery of San Buenaventura appealed to him in person; permission was given for a commission of the Brothers to perform the Cock's Mass at the Vatican, and after hearing it for himself the Pope gave a special licence for its continuance in a slightly modified form.

San Buenaventura is the church to go to on Christmas Eve in Seville if one would hear the Cock's Mass in its most refined form, with good singing and organ-playing; but for real local colour and a passionate fervour which overflows all the bonds of self-restraint, we must find standing-room, if we can, in the little chapel of San Antonio Abad, in the street called Alfonso XII., for this is the chosen resort of the poor, to whom their religion is as real as their daily bread.

The Mass begins on the stroke of midnight, but hours before that the little church will be occupied by silent worshippers, who kneel on the floor praying, with their eyes fixed on the high altar. Here is displayed the Nativity, and prominent among the figures is a donkey, the pride and glory of the congregation, because it is the only life-sized model of the kind to be seen in any church in Seville.

People drop in every minute or so to look at the *Nacimiento*, kneel for a short time in prayer, and then go out again to meet their friends and pass the time till the Mass begins. The streets are crowded, and every café and restaurant is full, for people go from one church to another to see the different *Nacimientos*, and few of them will get to bed before two or three in the morning; so the system must be sustained with coffee and cakes, or wine and ham, or *aguardiente* and crab claws, or cold water and roasted chestnuts or acorns, according to personal taste and depth of purse.

At midnight the Mass begins at San Antonio Abad with a clash of barbaric sounds, the small organ being reinforced by guitars, tambourines, castanets, triangles, and an Oriental instrument called a *zambomba*, which must be an inheritance from the most primitive times of Arabic music.

This is made of coarse clay, and is in shape something like a flower-pot, with a waist in the middle and with no bottom. The wider end is covered with a tightly stretched parchment, through which is thrust a thin piece of cane, tightly tied underneath. The "music" is produced by wetting the hand and then rubbing the cane up and down, and the noise it makes is indescribable. If one can imagine a drum bellowing like a cow that has lost her calf, one would come somewhere near the sound of the *zambomba*: but it must be heard to be appreciated. The Andalucians love it, and if they can't afford to buy a *zambomba* for the *Noche Buena* they will make one of a flower pot with a wet cloth stretched over it instead of the skin—a substitute which produces even weirder noises than the legitimate vessel.

This instrument of torture is not now often to be heard in the churches, and it is to be feared that even in San Antonio Abad it will soon cease to delight the Christmas Eve congregation; but when we first went to Seville it was still an essential part of the orchestra.

The whole of the Cock's Mass is but a gradual leading up to the crowning act of the "Good Night"—the presentation of the Babe to be kissed by the worshippers. In most of the churches this is a solemn ceremony, and one feels how intensely in earnest are those who file past the altar steps to kneel before the image of the infant Saviour. The blazing lights that surround the image, the gorgeous vestments of the priests, the dim light of the side aisles whence the veiled worshippers glide out, kneel to kiss the foot of the little figure, and then disappear into the darkness again,—all this combines to make the Cock's Mass in many of the churches a picturesque and emotional spectacle. In such churches there is only the organ, or perhaps a string band, and there is nothing archaic in the traditional Cock's Mass save the name.

But in San Antonio Abad and other minor churches frequented mainly if not entirely by the poor, the Mass has quite another character.

In some of these the music begins as early as eleven, soft and low at first, and gradually increasing in tone and cheerfulness as time goes on and the church fills more and more. And the spirits of the people rise with the music, until some piece with a strongly marked rhythm strikes up, and the congregation seem to lose their heads altogether. They sway from side to side, keep time with their heads and hands, and finally break into step with their feet, completely carried away by excitement as the "Good Night" draws nearer and nearer to its climax.

They recover themselves when the bell rings for the elevation of the Host, and all kneel down, although they are so tightly packed that it is a gymnastic feat to get up again. There is a pause, as if they were taking breath, during the Benediction, and then, as the head priest takes his seat on the altar steps with the image of the Infant on his knee, the music bursts out again, organ, guitars, tambourines, *zambombas*, in a triumphant medley of sound without any particular form or rhythm, and the whole crowd moves simultaneously towards the Nativity, one step at a time, without the least pushing or shoving, but all resolved to adore their Christ, to see and touch "The Child" who is also "The Lord."

It means a good deal to some of them: nothing less, indeed, than an augury for good or ill for the year to come. I heard one woman in the crowd tell another as they left the church one Christmas Eve that she would have good fortune now, for *El Niño* had looked up at her and smiled as she knelt to worship Him: and her naïve confidence in the happy omen explained much that would otherwise have puzzled me in the demeanour of the crowd during the Cock's Mass.

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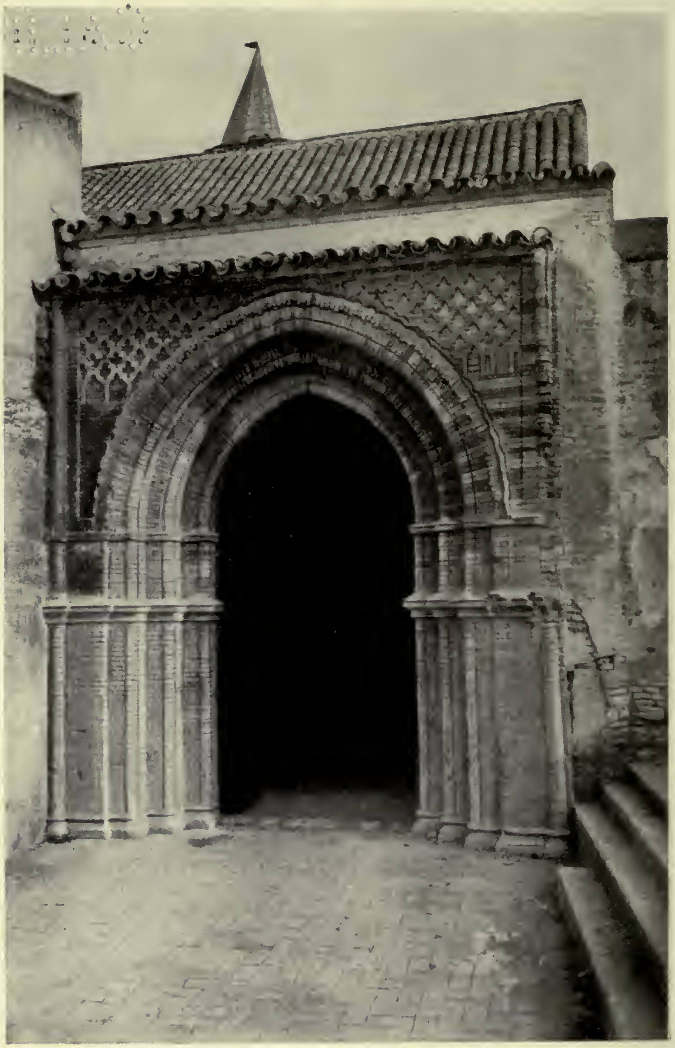


THE BRIDEGROOM'S DOOR.

CHAPTER XIII

The Columbus country—The way to Moguer—A rickety bridge—An historical family—Blue eyes and honourable hearts—Fifteenth-century iron work—Martin Alonso Pinzón, the friend of Columbus—His history as told by his descendant—Palos de la Frontera—The castle of the Pinzóns—The church of St. George—The Virgin of Columbus—The bridegroom's door—La Rabida: what it is and what it might be.

February in southern Spain is already spring as a rule, but I visited the Columbus country in 1912, and in that unusual year the winter ran on well into the middle of February, a month which generally carpets the fields with blue iris, golden buttercups, and scarlet poppies. So my trip to Moguer, Palos de la Frontera, and La Rabida may come under the heading of Winter Sketches, and perhaps my readers will like to know that it is possible to explore these remote villages even in showery weather.

I started with the intention of doing a few days' digging in a buried town on the banks of the Rio Tinto, on my way to the Tharsis copper mines, away up in the Sierra de Huelva, where I was going to see a little museum of objects found by the Company in their various shafts. But the weather, perfect when I left Seville, changed in the night, and I woke next morning to see a downpour of rain which put excavations out of the question—the more so because to reach my site I had to cross the Rio Tinto by a ford which is impassable after rain. So I left my *jamugas* and tools in the charge of the amiable landlady of the uncomfortable rooms I had been compelled to engage because there was no other within many miles of the ruins, and went on to Moguer, furnished with an introduction to the family of Pinzón, lineal descendants of Martin Alonso Pinzón, who with his two brothers accompanied Columbus on his epoch-making voyage from Palos de la Frontera to the Bahamas.

I left the train in a heavy shower at the wretched little station of San Juan del Puerto, a poverty-stricken village lying on the mud-flats of the Rio Tinto near its junction with the Odiel. This is the nearest station to Moguer, and people who want to see the district, which is very pretty as well as full of historical interest, should not be misled by the guide-books into taking any other route to La Rabida, for reasons which I will presently explain.

Moguer is only about a mile and a half from the station, and a diligence meets every train. It is true that it is not a luxurious conveyance, and sometimes if one does not rush to secure a seat one may find oneself left behind. So unless the trip is a sudden thought, as mine was, it is well to write to the landlady of the Fonda Almirante Pinzón at Moguer, and she will not only send a carriage to the station, but reserve one of her few bedrooms for you, and add an extra dish to her simple dinner in view of your arrival. It is always advisable, when possible, to give notice of your coming to modest little hostelries like this.

The diligence was not crowded the day I first went to Moguer. In fact it contained, besides myself, only an old doctor and his young wife, and the village idiot from San Juan, who rode on the step outside until he realised that nothing was to be got out of the doctor or me by his whines, and then he dropped off and strolled back in the rain to his own place.

Not far out of San Juan there is a long low wooden bridge on trestles across the Rio Tinto, which here is very wide. It creaked and groaned a good deal as we crossed it, and the doctor remarked that it had been condemned long ago as unsafe by the Inspector of Roads, and every time he crossed it he wondered whether it would hold up till he got to the other side.

"Oh, Cayetano! How can you say so, when we have to return by the same road to-morrow!" shrieked his wife.

I looked at the turbid yellow water, already swollen with the rain. A bath in it would be highly unpleasant, even if it were nothing worse than a bath. But we got safely across, and rattled up a gentle rise into the pretty little town, where at every turn one meets reminders of the wealth and splendour that it enjoyed in the sixteenth century, when the gold that poured in from America enriched every one connected with those who adventured in the New World.

The Fonda del Almirante Pinzón is established on the ground floor of the house belonging to the Admiral's grandson, and when I was there the family, reduced in means like so many of the old nobility, were living on the floor above. Ever since the great days of their voyages with Columbus the head of the Pinzóns has been a sailor, and the Admiral whose name is given to the hotel distinguished himself in the Peninsular War, and quite recently a cruiser was sent to convey his remains to the national pantheon of illustrious mariners at San Fernando. And his son upheld and his grandson still upholds the traditions of a family which Charles v. honoured with a grant of nobility, and the same arms as those given to Columbus himself—the three historic caravels and the motto—

"*A Castilla y á Leon*
Nuevo mundo dió Pinzón."

(To Castile and to Leon
A new world was given by Pinzón.)

But the proudest boast of the Pinzóns, who were wealthy when their great ancestor first set sail for the unknown west, is that they have never soiled their hands with ill-gotten gains, and that one Admiral Pinzón after another has held high posts under Government and has left office no richer than when he entered it. Honesty such as this, in a country where politics and office are universally regarded as a short road to a fortune, argues a standard of morality as lofty as it is rare. Sigismund Moret, the Liberal statesman who was three times intrigued out of the Premiership because he would not buy party support, died a poor man, and all the Spanish press united to proclaim the fact as the highest honour they could pay him. As yet it is vain to hope for the honest administration of public money, but we must trust that in the long-run the example of the Pinzóns and the Morets and their like will prevail. For it is one of the tragedies of Spain that her natural wealth, mineral and agricultural, is immense, and she only needs honest and common-sense administration to become one of the richest, instead of the poorest country in Europe.

This digression is excusable because in the Columbus country you meet the Pinzóns at every turn, and it is they and their like who some day will leaven the lump. It is usual to say that Spain will never rise because the dead weight of egoism and self-seeking lying on the top of the good dough underneath will prevent any sound morality from getting to the top. But *qui vivra verra.* I, personally, believe that cracks are spreading in the crust of administrative selfishness, and I hope before I die to see some such awakening here as took place in my own country when I was young, and English society suddenly began to realise that it had not fulfilled its whole duty to the poor by giving them blankets and beef-tea.

The little *fonda* with its grand name is not a place one wants to stay long at, for although clean the beds are somewhat hard, and the food is such as might be expected for five pesetas a day *tout compris.* But in the modest patio there is a large painting of the Virgin of Montemayor which belonged to the Admiral and his forbears. And in the simply furnished dining-room there is a beautiful wrought-iron well-head dating from the fifteenth century, in style and design identical with the pulpit in the little church of Palos de la Frontera, whence was read the decree of Isabel the Catholic calling on her lieges of the port to man and furnish the ships *Santa Maria* and *Niña* for the expedition into the unknown. These ships, according to the Pinzóns, were the property of Martin Alonso Pinzón and his brothers, although in the lawsuit brought many years after by Diego, the son of Columbus, against the State a different account was given. The papers relating to that long quarrel have been the basis for much of what has been written about Columbus' first expedition, so if my readers find the family traditions widely varying from popular histories of the period, they must remember that the Pinzón point of view naturally differs from that of the other side in an unhappy lawsuit, and they may choose for themselves which story they will believe.

The day after my arrival at Moguer was bright and sunny, and the Señora de Pinzón, after studying my credentials, allowed her young daughter Conchita (otherwise Maria de la Concepción) to join me in my expedition to La Rabida. This was really a great favour, for Spanish mothers never like to let their girls out of their sight until they are safely married. But Conchita had been educated by the Irish nuns of the Loretto at Gibraltar, and the

Señora could not resist her appeal to be allowed to spend the day with me to practise her English, which she said she was afraid of forgetting. It seemed to make the dry bones of history curiously alive to go over the ground with that bright young creature and hear her continual references to "my ancestor Martin Alonso" as we drove along a pretty lane to the famous Palos, greeted by every man, woman, and child we met with a cordiality which showed in what esteem the family are held here.

"We never were very rich," said Conchita, "although our vineyards and olive orchards formerly brought in a good deal more than they do now, so it was not our money that made my family popular here. No, it is what my ancestor did for Spain that is never forgotten. You see he lived here all his life, while Columbus was only a foreign visitor, who came to find ships and went away again. It is no wonder that the people remember my ancestor better than him."

The intense pride of my little friend in her family history shone through every word she spoke. She expressed it more openly, perhaps, than an English girl would have done in her place, but I am bound to say I cordially sympathised with her. I am proud enough of my own ancestors, whose deeds made but the faintest mark on the history of their time. If they had helped to discover America there would have been no holding me!

Palos, the once famous port about half-way between La Rabida and Moguer, now lies high and dry, with a strip of pasturage between the village and the estuary. Even the little caravels of 1483 could now not anchor anywhere near the ruined castle, and the whole place seems to sleep away the days, resting on its fame in the past.

"The castle belonged to my ancestor," said Conchita, pointing out a ruined wall on a slight eminence behind the little church. "There was only a tower left when Columbus came, and my ancestor's residence was at Moguer. But the Pinzóns kept their vessels here, and it was here that Columbus came to look for Martin Alonso and talk to him about the voyage he wanted to make. He had made Martin Alonso's acquaintance in Rome, where they were both studying navigation. You know it was a favourite study in those days with rich men who loved the sea. How ridiculous it is to say that Columbus came here by chance! You see what an out-of-the-way place it is. And if he had wanted to get to Huelva to visit his brother-in-law, as Washington Irving says, he would have been a fool to go to La Rabida, to which there is no road at all except this, while Huelva was on the main road. It says in our family papers that Columbus came to look for his friend Martin Alonso Pinzón and discuss with him plans for the voyage, and Martin Alonso went with him to La Rabida. The story of his asking for food and drink at La Rabida is silly. As if my ancestor would have let him leave his house without giving him and his child a good dinner! It makes me angry to see that absurd picture at La Rabida of the porter giving bread and water to his little boy. It is quite modern and not at all well painted, I am glad to say!"

We had climbed up to investigate the ruined wall, melancholy relic of the strong fortress that gave Palos its importance as a frontier town (*de la frontera*) during the civil war between Moslems and Mozarabs in the ninth century, when all this district was in the hands of descendants of King Witiza, the last legitimate monarch of the Goths, whom for twenty-five years the Sultans of Cordova sought in vain to dislodge. From this eminence I could see that, before it silted up, the little harbour of Palos would have been a safe and convenient shelter from the west winds sweeping up the broad estuary.

"Two of the ships belonged to the Pinzóns," said Conchita, "but the family were out of favour with the Catholic Kings—we have never found out why—and they could not lend them to Columbus without asking leave of the Queen, who had put an embargo on them by way of punishment for some unknown offence. When Columbus and my ancestor had well talked over the proposed adventure, they went to La Rabida to ask the Prior, Juan Perez de Marchena, to use his influence with Isabella to remove the embargo, so that Martin Alonso and his brothers might lend Columbus their ships. The Pinzóns could not go to the Court themselves, because they were in disgrace. I wish we knew why. The family papers tell us nothing, and there is only a vague tradition that it was something to do with religion. I cannot imagine what it could be, for the Pinzóns have always been good Catholics, and they had not long before restored or rebuilt part of this church, which as you see is very old indeed."

While we talked we were sitting on a bench in the little church of St. George. On our left was the wrought-iron pulpit whence the call for volunteers was read; on the right was the ancient image of the Virgin which local tradition claims as the one which Columbus took with him on board the *Santa Maria.*

It is by no means improbable that local tradition is correct, for the image is mediæval, and as such would have been the object of special adoration by the people of Palos then as now. Thus Martin Alonso Pinzón, the lord of Palos, could do no greater honour to his friend Columbus, and find no surer way to calm the fears of the families of their crews, than by taking this venerated image as the patroness of the expedition. The ships were bound to come safe home again, the people of Palos would say, having their beloved Virgin on board.

Traditions about the patron image of a town do not grow up spontaneously, although as the centuries go by the original story becomes adorned and overlaid with the additions made to it by one generation after another. Without some foundation in fact, it is most unlikely that the statement that this was the image in question should have been made and accepted, and thenceforth handed on as a tradition by the people of Palos. Little was seen of Columbus at Palos after his return from his first voyage. The Pinzóns attribute this to the early death of Martin

Alonso, said by historians to be due to his disappointment that Columbus should have obtained more honour and rewards than himself after his "base desertion" of the Admiral at Cuba. The family naturally ignore, if indeed they are not now ignorant of, all that was alleged against their ancestor in the lawsuit of Diego Colon. For them Martin Alonso's death was brought about by the hardships he suffered and the illness he contracted when through stress of weather his ship was separated from that of Columbus, whom he never saw again until both the great navigators returned to Palos, one in the morning and the other in the evening of 15th March 1493, seven months and a half after they had left the little port together. Be this as it may, it must be admitted that Pinzón and his brothers played an important part in the discovery of the New World, and that it was their great misfortune to be under a cloud at Court when favours and rewards were being showered upon the man whom they had so materially aided at the outset.

Perhaps if I had visited Palos with a descendant of Columbus instead of a daughter of the other house, the part played by Pinzón would assume smaller proportions in my retrospect of that far-off time. But as things were, I felt as if I had got the story from the very actors themselves, and I could no more doubt that this was indeed the patron image which watched over the adventurers from the chapel set up on the *Santa Maria* by her owner, Martin Alonso Pinzón, when he handed his ship over to Columbus as commander of the "fleet," than

I could doubt that Martin Alonso was more sinned against than sinning in the reports that were spread of his disappearance on the coast of Cuba.

And when Conchita took me out round the west end and down a flight of steps to the north door of the church, which is decorated with red and white brickwork of the style called "Mozarabic," and told me that it was known as the "Door of the Bridegrooms" when the Pinzóns lived at the castle, and was only opened to admit the eldest son of the family on his wedding-day, I found myself quite able to accept her statement, regardless of various inherent improbabilities which afterwards suggested themselves.

Having thoroughly taken in the beauty and the tradition of this architectural gem, with its fortress-like outer walls, its strangely dwarfed nave, and its lofty Gothic transepts, we resumed our triumphal progress along the road travelled by Columbus four hundred and twenty-eight years before—I say triumphal advisedly, for all down the one narrow ill-paved street of Palos, Conchita was bowing and smiling like a young princess at the people who ran out to greet her when they caught the sound of our approaching wheels. One understood that not many carriages drive through the village nowadays, but mere curiosity would not account for the cordiality of her reception.

From Palos to La Rabida the road is good and well kept, and at one point it is really very pretty, winding through a pine wood, between the trees of which we see the Arabic *Tapia* of the monastery walls gleaming rosy pink in the afternoon sun on their eminence above the estuary.

The inherent lack of common sense which characterises all Spanish administration is exemplified by the very existence of this road. In 1893 the fourth centenary of the discovery of America was marked by a tremendous celebration organised by what is called the Columbian Society of Huelva. The monastery was proclaimed a "national monument," which means that its upkeep is henceforth a national charge, and no further voluntary effort to preserve it will ever be made, or even expected. An overpowering column with a statue of Columbus on top was set up at a cost, I have been told, of 80,000 pesetas (£3200)—a large sum to be raised by subscription in Spain—which was designed and erected by the architect to the Government. A landing-stage was built on the bank of the estuary for holiday-makers coming from Huelva, and a broad road, wide enough for half a dozen carriages to drive abreast, was made from the landing-stage up to the monastery, and carried on thence to join the road to Palos, as I have said. Extensive repairs and restorations were begun in the building, and the slopes round it were laid out as gardens, which were to be a glory of indigenous and American flowers and foliage—as well they might in a climate where everything grows at such a rate that the blossoming of Aaron's rod would hardly be a miracle here.

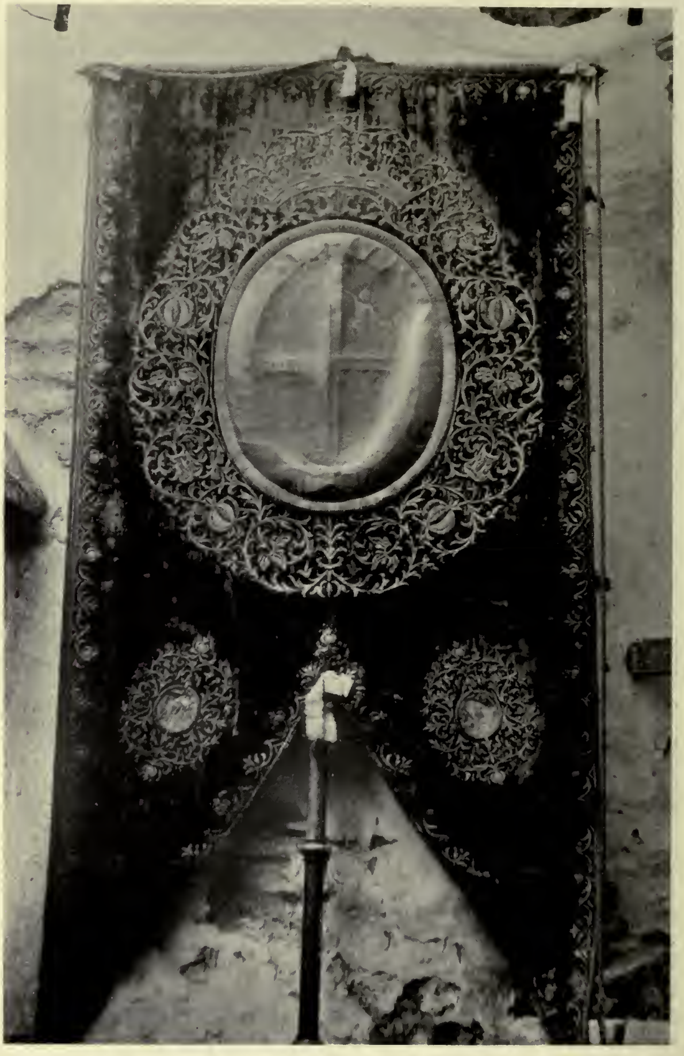
But alas! the great column, ludicrously out of place alongside of the monastery walls, all weathered and mellowed by time, has never been finished; and worse than that, it was jerry built with what may have been left, after the celebration was concluded, of the 80,000 pesetas subscribed by a confiding public, and now, twenty-one years after the first stone was laid, this national monument to Spain's greatest hero is surrounded by a rough paling labelled in large letters *Peligro* (Danger), and one passes it hastily by, wondering whether the statue of Columbus will fall on one's innocent head from the lofty height which makes its details indiscernible.

A peal at the monastery door—the door by which Columbus entered—brings forth an unshaven porter, who turns one loose to wander at will in the empty cloisters, but reappears in search of his *pourboire* when he hears one's steps returning. No photographs or even picture post-cards are to be obtained here, no printed papers or books relating to the building, there are no seats to be found in the whole of the monastery save some tiled recesses in the chapel walls—all is empty and desolate, with the unmistakable air of a place seldom visited and quickly left.

The broad new road down to the water serves no possible purpose, for no conveyance of any kind can be procured nearer than Moguer, and for visitors with time and energy to make the journey there on foot a path from the landing-stage to Palos would have served every purpose. A forlorn rowing-boat was moored to the steps where we went down, but its owner could not be found. It was kept there, our coachman told us, in case any one wanted to row to Huelva, several miles away up the mouth of the Odiel. "But," he added scornfully, "who wants to row to Huelva when they have come in a carriage from Moguer?"

La Rabida is a monument of misspent public money. I was told that in summer people make up water parties from Huelva, but they must all bring their own refreshments, for not so much as a cup of coffee can be got at the monastery. One thought what a Mecca for Americans, and indeed for all other pilgrims, this spot could be made, were it in hands more appreciative and more sensible than those of the Spanish bureaucracy. One pictured a gay little hotel down below, far enough removed from the monastery not to jar on its old-world peace, but near enough to offer comfort and convenience to the pilgrim, whether he came by land or sea. One provided the sunny refectory, now empty save for those inferior fancy pictures of Columbus which annoyed Conchita Pinzón, with a library of books dealing with the history of the place and of the voyages of Columbus and his companions; one saw the friars' cells, now closed and smelling of shut windows, furnished and available for students to live and work in; and one installed a service of motors from Seville and Huelva to the landing-stage, so that every tourist who came to Seville might take a day's run to Moguer, Palos, and La Rabida, as a necessary part of his Andalucian trip.

But alas! a heavy shower woke me from my dream of what ought to be in this lovely corner of a lovely land. The sky had darkened while we



THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BANNER OF OUR LADY OF GRANADA.

CHAPTER XIV

The Convento de la Luz—The Poor Clares and the Conceptionists—Our Lady of Montemayor—A fortified religious house—The *ribats* of Spain—The ancient refectory—Arabic inscriptions in the Nun's Chapel—The Portocarreros—Family tombs—A night at San Juan—The shyness of the nun—An early start—Mossen Bethancourt and the Canary Isles—The beginning of the floods.

"You who are so interested in everything old should not leave Moguer without seeing the *Convento de la Luz,*" said Conchita as we drove back from La Rabida. "I will take you there to-morrow morning if you like, before you start for the train. Formerly no one except the clergy could enter any part of the convent, for it belonged to the Poor Clares, and you know how rigidly closed the Order is. But now they are all dead, and the convent has been sold or let or lent by the Duke of Alba to the Conceptionists—the teaching branch, not the closed one—and the Reverend Mother lets me take in visitors at any time. All the aristocracy of Moguer send their daughters to be educated there, and they have free classes for the poor as well. It enlivens our circle having the Conceptionist nuns there instead of the Poor Clares."

She went on to tell me that the convent had become hopelessly impoverished, though it was once one of the wealthiest in the district. The Clares seem to have lived like private ladies, each with her little suite of rooms, bedroom, sitting-room, and kitchen, and even her own share of the walled garden. Each had her own woman servant, who lived not in the convent but in the town, coming in and out daily to attend to her mistress's wants. Anything less like the accepted idea of monastic life I never heard of; and when I saw the bright sunny little flats partitioned off by the nuns for their private convenience, I wondered still more how such a conception of asceticism could have lasted down to the end of the first decade of the twentieth century.

"Reverend Mother says," pursued Conchita, "that the one Poor Clare who still lived when the Archbishop of Seville sanctioned the transfer to the Conceptionists, was the tiniest creature she ever saw, quite imbecile from age, and withered and shrunk up just like a doll. They had been gradually dying off one by one, until this little old woman was the only inhabitant of the convent, which is so large that it contains a dormitory a hundred feet long, while the central patio is a hundred feet square. There are many beautiful objects of art there even now, and they say that formerly it was a perfect treasure-house. No one knows when it was built, but the Pinzóns' ancestors, the Portocarreros, whose monuments you will see there, were very rich, and they always protected the convent. What date was that? Oh, I don't know, but it was before the discovery of America; and of course after that, when everybody grew rich, the convent got more gifts than ever. But you can fancy what went on in later years, when the Poor Clares were getting older and more helpless every day, and more dependent on their servants. They say that those women never went in without securing some valuable work of art to carry off and sell, though where they sold them no one knows, for they were never offered in Moguer. Of course not! No one *here* would buy valuables robbed from the nuns. Well, that is all over now, and no one will steal what is left. The Conceptionists are not poor at all (though of course they always want money for their free classes) and they take great care of the pictures and tiles, and everything else that those bad servants could not carry away."

Truth to tell, I did not expect to find much that would interest me in the *Convento de la Luz*, imagining from Conchita's account that it would be a fifteenth-century building of the type so frequently found in this part of Spain. The wealthy and powerful families of Arcos and Medina Sidonia set the fashion at that time of lavishing their riches on building and restoring convents and monasteries, and of course every great noble with plenty of money followed their example. Too often the gold which poured into Andalucia after the discovery of America was spent on barbaric display of carved and gilded woodwork, chased silver, and costly draperies, more conspicuous for their money value than for their beauty: and I confess that I rather disliked the idea of spending a couple of my few hours at Moguer in visiting such a monument, when I might have driven out to the hermitage of Our Lady of Montemayor. For Our Lady of Montemayor had been worshipped as far back as the ninth century, when Palos de la Frontera was an outpost of the Spanish Christians, who, although they forgot their language during the many centuries of Moslem rule, steadily maintained their religious beliefs.

But it was impossible to refuse the invitation of my kind and courteous little friend, and I agreed to go with her to the convent next morning instead of making an expedition into the country.

What then was my delight at finding in the *Convento de la Luz* an almost perfect survival of the fortified religious houses which the Moslems called *ribats*—outposts built to defend the frontier, and garrisoned by men of a semi-religious order, sworn to this particular form of military service. Whether the Order was originally instituted in Andalucia by the Christians (Mozarabs) who remained in occupation of their lands and castles when Spain was conquered by the Mohammedans, no one seems to know, though the existence of La Rabida itself, and of various other places bearing the same name, in which Mozarabic remains are seen, suggests that *ribats* were established here long before the Almoravides founded their empire over Morocco and Spain, in a *ribat* on the river Niger in the first half of the twelfth century.

Be that as it may, I saw at once that the *Convento de la Luz* was built for such a fortress, while the church with its massive walls and buttressed ramparts could never have been intended for other than Christian worship.

So much for the outside. The only break in the enclosing walls is where an opening has been made to give easier access from the street. One sees that formerly the nuns had to come out and cross a courtyard to speak with callers at the gate, and one can understand that this would hardly suit the comfort-loving old ladies who were the last of this branch of their Order.

A Sister opened a heavy door giving on a cloister which borders all four sides of the great central court, and led us through an archway six feet deep into a large hall. This was the refectory in the days when a hundred Poor Clares occupied the convent, but now it is the nuns' reception-room, and here the mothers of pupils, rich and poor, sit and discuss with the Superior and the heads of the classes the tastes, talents, and idiosyncrasies of their girls.

It is a very lofty, chapel-like hall, whose vaulted roof would suggest a thirteenth-century architect, but for the tiny windows, placed so high up that one sees that the first thought of the builder was security against attack. And we know that after 1257, when this district was conquered by Alfonso x., there was no need to build fortified religious houses. We sat on brick benches left in the thickness of the wall and faced with iridescent tiles of the rich green colour introduced by the Arabs out of compliment to Mahomet's banner; and as I watched a ray of sun from one of those lofty windows lighting up the gilded halos in a fifteenth-century painting of the Last Supper, I wished the walls could speak and tell us the true history of the convent. Even the origin of its name is lost. The townspeople call it *de la Luz*, but they do not know why, and the earliest mention of it in Andalucian history, which is in 1349, describes it as "The convent of Santa Clara at Moguer."

More than one of the earliest crucifixes existent in Andalucia is known as "*Nuestro Señor Cristo de la luz*" (Our Lord Christ of light), and such works of art, be it remembered, are necessarily Mozarabic, because the Mozarabs were the only Christians in this part of Spain previous to 1248. There is a fine one in the Nuns' Chapel of this convent, the advocation of which has been forgotten. Perhaps the last little Poor Clare, had she not been in her dotage when the convent was taken over by its present occupants, could have told them that this was "Our Lord of Light," whose prototype had been worshipped here for about a thousand years.

This may seem a bold statement to those who suppose that the Christians suffered persecution during the rule of Islam in Spain. But recent research has proved that so far from this being the case, the Christians as a rule were treated with kindness and consideration, as long as they refrained from showing open disrespect for the alien religion. And here in Moguer is the material corroboration of conclusions deduced from scattered references to the condition of the Mozarabs which are found in the writings of the time, both Arabic and

Christian. For the walls of the Nuns' Chapel (screened off by a stone grille with Arabic tracery from the church restored by the Portocarreros) are lined with ancient wooden choir stalls, on each arm of which is carved a lion's head and an Arabic inscription in Kufic characters of the style used in Cordova in the tenth century. These certainly were not placed here after 1257, at which date the African character was in use all over Moslem Spain, and as certainly such stalls never were used in Moslem worship.

It was interesting to retrace the course of history from that time to this. Here was the evidence of the upholding of their faith by the native Christians for century after century, during the whole of which they were practically cut off from Rome and isolated from their co-religionists elsewhere. A painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe, surrounded by worshippers in thirteenth-century costumes, seemed to bring us into direct contact with the period when Andalucia was conquered by San Fernando of Castile, and her "few remaining loyal priests" were confirmed in their houses and offices by that wise monarch. In the church were life-size alabaster effigies of the noble family of Portocarrero, nine men and women in fifteenth-century dress, at the foot of the high altar. Burial in that sacred spot was the privilege granted to Don Pedro Portocarrero, Lord of Moguer, his wife Doña Elvira Alvarez, and their heirs for ever, in acknowledgment by a grateful Church of their benefactions to the convent of Santa Clara and the monastery of San Francisco, which last comparatively modern edifice is now falling into ruin in the shadow of the imperishable walls of the Mozarabic foundation. Above us hung a lamp made of silver brought from the New World by Martin Alonso Pinzón, although his tomb, as Conchita regretfully admitted, is not to be found here. And by my side was the young daughter of those ancient houses, who proudly told me that she too inherited the right to be buried at the foot of the high altar when her time came.

Truly this Columbus country has more than ordinary interest for the traveller in Spain, and as I remarked at the beginning of my attempt to describe it, it is a pity to be misled by the guidebooks into visiting La Rabida by boat from Huelva instead of by diligence from San Juan del Puerto. Because, in the first place, if the weather be bad you cannot get to La Rabida by water at all, and, in in any case, as the estuary there is very wide and much exposed to wind and to the Atlantic waves, a trip of two hours each way is apt to be unpleasant to all except first-rate sailors. And because, in the second place, even though you are a good sailor and get to La Rabida in ideal weather, you will certainly not have time to go on to Palos and Moguer and get back to Huelva before nightfall, since you will have no option but to walk from La Rabida. And, as I hope I have shown, Palos and Moguer have attractions for the artist and the archæologist, as well as for the pilgrim to the shrine of Columbus.

For my own part, although I was obliged to catch the afternoon train from San Juan in order to go on to the mines of Tharsis on the day that Conchita first introduced me to the Convent de la Luz, I shamelessly threw over all my other engagements on the return journey, and went straight back to Moguer.

Not quite straight back, though, come to think of it, for the diligence was crowded when I reached San Juan, and as it was impossible to get any other conveyance, or even a donkey to ride, I had to spend the night there, since it was pouring with rain and I dared not attempt the walk to Moguer in the dark, through mud up to my ankles.

The only room I could get was at the one inn in the place, an establishment consisting of two rooms and my bedroom, which opened off the kitchen. It literally *opened* off it, for the door had no kind of fastening, and the landlady's niece put a chair against it on the outside, as the only means of preventing my toilet operations being performed in public. The whole place was streaming with damp, and flood-marks were plainly to be seen on the walls of my bedroom. There was no food to be had except *puchero*, and the landlady was quite grateful when I told her I could dine off the remains of the excellent lunch provided by my hosts at Tharsis, for she had no one to send out for supplies.

The poor little place was clean, the people inspired me with such confidence that the keyless door did not trouble me in the least, and I slept from the time I went to bed till 6 a.m. Then I got up and dressed by the light of a candle, for the diligence was to start at seven, and I intended to walk on and cross the trestle bridge before it picked me up. Heavy rains had swollen the rivers everywhere, and I reflected with dismay on the remarks of my travelling companion on the condition of that bridge when we drove over it the week before.

It was still almost dark when I left the village behind me, and through the gloom a blazing wood fire shone invitingly alongside of the railway line, from the cottage of a family in charge of the level crossing. The wife ran out and begged me to come in and warm myself, full of wonder and commiseration at the hard fate—whatever it might be—that compelled a *señora de edad* ("a lady advanced in years") to take the road on foot so early in the morning.

I had to explain that the English of all ages have a curious fancy for walking in the dark, and after a few minutes' pause, filled up by the family's ejaculations at my remarkable activity, I pursued my way across the rickety bridge, watching a pale yellow gleam gradually appearing in the east, and wondering whether it meant that the sun would come out presently. The river was higher than ever. As a rule the Rio Tinto is a stream of wonderful colours, coppery green and bronze and orange, which turn to molten gold in the sunshine; but now the flood-water had so completely swamped the rest that it looked more like a sea of liquid mud than the "dyed river." It seemed to me doubtful whether the bridge would hold up another twenty-four hours, and I knew that the part of wisdom would be to turn round and go back to Seville by the next train. But I was bent upon another visit to the convent at Moguer, and still more bent upon getting the photographs which the Mother Superior had given me leave to take, and I could only hope that the yellow streak in the east might mean a day without rain and a diminished flood to-morrow.

I got my photographs, between showers, and one of them would have been made quite charming by the graceful figure of the nun who showed me round, leaning over the well-head to raise the bucket from the water far below. But when she realised that she was in the picture she fled behind the camera, and nothing would induce her to pose for me.

"*Por Dios!*" she cried; "I cannot go out into the world in a photograph!"

The rain began again in the evening, and I heard it pelting on the windows as I sat with the Señora de Pinzón and her daughter round the cosy *camilla*, talking of friends in common. We are apt to think a brazier rather an insufficient means of warming a room on a chilly night, but when we have sat an hour or so with our toes under the round petticoated table close to the pan of charcoal, we find ourselves suffused from head to foot with a warm glow which is by no means to be despised. It was late when I took my leave of the family to whom I owed so much of the enjoyment of my trip, and I had to get up about 4 a.m. to catch the early diligence to the station. I was anxious to get across the estuary as soon as possible, and I had given special orders to secure my seat in the bus beforehand.

"You will not mind letting yourself out," said the landlady cheerfully, when I bade her good-night. "I have told the driver to send a man down for your luggage at five o'clock. He will tap at your window when he comes, and you will find the key in the door. We do not get up so early if we can help it, and we know you are a lady who can be trusted to shut the street door after her."

I don't suppose there was much to steal in the *fonda*, but whatever there was I could have taken it had I chosen, when I left Moguer next morning, and I thought it was just as well that the Señora de Pinzón had a stout iron grille at the entrance to her apartments upstairs, with all their valuable historical contents, if this was the usual way of speeding the parting guest. I got up at four, boiled water to wash in on my spirit stove, drank hot coffee out of my thermos flask, and packed my things ready to start at five. But five struck, and 5.15, and 5.30, and no one came from the diligence, and at last in despair I unlocked the street door, left it on the latch, and hurried up the hill in the rain and darkness to the coach office. There was the coach ready to start, and the driver was taking his early *aguardiente* in the drink shop hard by, but there was no one to fetch my luggage, and when I got hold of the coachman he said he had heard nothing about it, and had no one to send.

"But the landlady told me she gave special orders last night, and that you promised to have me fetched at five o'clock."

"She didn't tell me, for I was not at the office. Had she told me I should have been at the *fonda* before now. She must have told the other driver, who takes turns with me to go to the station. What is to be done? Can you not carry your own bag to the coach if I wait here for you?"

"I certainly can not. And meanwhile the *fonda* door is open for thieves to enter, and the inmates may be murdered in their beds. Why not fetch it yourself and earn my peseta instead of my giving it to some one else who does not deserve it half so much? I should be greatly obliged to you, and you will get your tip at the station just the same, besides your peseta now."

"*Andando!* (Come along!) Certainly I can do with a *pesetita* as well as another man."

And, telling an old woman in the shop to mind his meek and dejected horses, he set off with me to the inn, shouldered my belongings, shouted a "good-morning" outside the landlady's room which must have roused everybody within from the sleep they were so desirous of prolonging, and banged the street door as we went out with a noise loud enough to wake the town.

"They thoroughly deserve it," said he as we hurried off together. "What disgraceful discourtesy to allow a lady like your honour to leave the *fonda* unattended! *Gracias á Dios* that I was on the spot to make good their short-comings. You will send for me next time you come to Moguer, Señora, and you shall not have to complain of negligence again!"

I certainly shall remember him, for I never saw a prompter "quick change act" from supine indifference to my plight to eager courtesy than was effected by him on the mention of the magic word "peseta."

It continued to rain heavily; we ploughed in pitch darkness through a sea of mud, and the diligence rocked and rolled in the ruts all down the long hill to the river. But I was so well entertained by the conversation of my only fellow-passenger that we got into San Juan and pulled up at the station before I realised that we had crossed the perilous bridge safe and sound.

He was, he said, going to meet a connection of his family recently arrived in Seville, Señor Bethancourt, who held a high diplomatic position in one of the South American republics. His relative's career, said the homely-looking countryman, had been most romantic. He came of a very old family of French origin, had left his home in Moguer when quite a lad, had been shipwrecked and cast up on the estate of a wealthy man who took him into his employ, and eventually made him a partner in the business and allowed him to marry his only daughter.

"But he has never forgotten his family at Moguer," concluded my friend, "and although I am only related to him through my wife, he has lately written to me saying that he was coming to Spain, and inviting me to meet him in Seville."

I may not have got the details of the romance quite right, but there was no doubt about the great man's loyalty to those he had left behind him, and all through the drive the name of Bethancourt rang in my ears, while I tried in vain to recall what I had previously known of the family.

On looking them up among the multifarious notes which I have a genius for making and forgetting, I found that here was another of Moguer's links with Spanish history.

In 1344 Pope Clement VI. gave the Lordship of the Canaries, then known as the Fortunate Isles, to Don Luis de la Cerda, a grandson of Alfonso X., with the title of Prince, and instructions to conquer and Christianise them. One would have thought that the islands should be conquered before they were given away, but it seems to have been the custom for the Popes to give away what they did not possess. Some historians assert that Alfonso XI., sovereign lord of the islands, was not best pleased at their being presented to his cousin, and wrote a letter to the Pope which to the frivolous modern eye seems to have been couched in a somewhat satirical vein, for he "thanked His Holiness for having made the gift, although it was in his (the writer's) sovereign dominion."

Don Luis de la Cerda, however, did not benefit by the somewhat dubious rights conferred on him, for he went off to France, his mother's native land, and was there killed in battle two years later, never having visited the Canaries at all; and the next we hear of the Fortunate Isles is that after some vicissitudes they came in the course of a business transaction into the hands of "Mossen Juan de Betancur," a French gentleman who carried out his enterprise to such good purpose that the people gave him the title of king.

This was in 1417, and meanwhile a good deal of highly profitable traffic had been going on between the "idolaters" of the islands and Seville and other Andalucian ports, including, it would seem, our little Palos and Moguer. Efforts were again being made to convert them, some Franciscan friars had established themselves there, and now Pope Martin v. appointed "Mossen" Bethancourt's cousin, Don Mendo, as Bishop of the Rubicon, which seems to have been the name given to the diocese, and he came to Seville to swear obedience, as his suffragan, to the Archbishop.

Twenty years later, the commerce with the Canaries becoming presumably more and more lucrative, it was discovered that a great mistake had been made in allowing a Frenchman to acquire the lordship of the islands, and an armed force was sent over from Spain to dispossess Mossen Juan's son, who now reigned in his stead, on the pretext of misgovernment and disrespect to the friars, who were busy making "new Christians" of "Mossen Menaute" Bethancourt's subjects.

Mossen Menaute, according to the chroniclers, was not strong enough to fight the Spaniards, but he came pretty well out of the business, for he sold his rights, lock, stock, and barrel, to the Count of Niebla, one of the Medina Sidonia family, and with the proceeds he established himself at Moguer. When his guiding hand was removed, the prosperous trade which had aroused the cupidity of the powers in Spain so quickly declined that the Canary Isles became a source of expense rather than of profit, and changed hands time after time in the next half-century; while "Mossen Betancur" flourished on his new estate, and founded the family with which my travelling companion was so pleased to claim connection.

I got back to Seville none too soon, for the rain which drove me away from Moguer continued and increased, until all the Andalucian rivers overflowed. The railway from Seville to Huelva was under water, and the Columbus country isolated. In the matter of the shaky bridge, however, good came out of evil, for it became so much shakier in consequence of the floods that the authorities were forced at last to take action, and now pilgrims to La Rabida may drive there *viâ* Moguer and Palos with quiet minds, for there is no longer any imminent danger of the diligence toppling over into the river.

CHAPTER XV

The Guadalquivir — Arabic gardens — "Bird's milk" — Wild camels—Tartessian cattle—The city of Hercules—The foundations of Tharsis—Subterranean galleries—The "Labyrinth"—A careful father—The potters' suburb—The City of the Poles—Triana under flood—Rising wells—A tower of refuge—Villages under water—Humours of the inundated—Governmental neglect—A night of terror—The gallant priest—King Alfonso feeds the hungry—The "Economical Kitchen"—Honours for the English ladies.

The Guadalquivir seems to be known to the English chiefly by Byron's references to it, and unluckily he rhymes it with "river," which was convenient for him, but not for the tourist who takes Byron for his guide to the pronunciation. For the Guadalquivir is the *Wady al kabir* of the Arabs (the great river) and the name is still pronounced with the accent, as in Arabic, on the last syllable. Thus when the traveller asks his way to the "Gwaddlequiver," the native is at a loss for his meaning. Baedeker might usefully see to this; and while he is about it he might also mention that Granáda has the accent on the second syllable. For when a traveller in a hurry asks for the train to "Grannader" the porters are apt to get confused and put him into the first train for any town the name of which is accented on the first syllable—*e.g.* Málaga. This actually happened

"THE ENGLISH ECONOMICAL KITCHEN."

in the case of an acquaintance of ours, who was rather deaf and did not know a word of Spanish. He found himself at Málaga instead of "Grannader," and his language was vigorous and picturesque. All this waste of time, temper, and money might have been avoided had Baedeker instructed his readers how to pronounce the Spanish for pomegranate.

Since time began Seville seems to have been the victim of floods. The catchment area of the Guadalquivir is enormous, since with its tributaries it drains practically the whole of Andalucia, from the Sierra Morena in the north to the Sierra Nevada in the south. From Cordova the river runs through vast plains, mostly alluvial soil of great fertility. So rich is this soil that the Arabs used to say that bird's milk could be got from the gardens round Seville, meaning that there is nothing that will not grow there with sufficient care and attention. The Arabic historians assure us that, nine centuries ago, there were twenty thousand farms and villages between Cordova and Seville, all living by agriculture and gardening; and although the number is obviously exaggerated, there can be no doubt that the whole of the riparian plain was highly cultivated. At that time the great river and its tributaries were so carefully dyked and dammed for purposes of milling and irrigation, that floods were far less frequent than now.

But the local archives show that within a century after the Christians became rulers of Seville the irrigation system was falling into decay, and the bed of the river was rapidly silting up. Now hardly a trace remains of the system of hydraulics inherited from Egypt, or perhaps inherited from Tartessus, for the Tartessians too constructed admirable waterworks. To-day, chiefly for lack of water, most of the valley of the Guadalquivir is a waste of rough pasture, a swamp in winter and a desert in summer, ranged over by herds of half-wild cattle when the spring and autumn showers have raised a crop of coarse grass; the resort of birds of every description, the dwelling-place of boar, deer, hares, and other wild creatures, great and small, and the safe refuge of a herd of wild camels, never approached and seldom seen unless by the passenger or crew of some river steamer when they come down to the water at dawn. Thus they were once observed by a friend of mine, who took them for cattle until the sun rose suddenly and she saw their humps. After that she was always on the look out for them, and saw them again not long after, near enough and for long enough to count sixteen of them, old and young.

The origin of this herd of wild camels is unknown, but it seems clear that they have a good deal of vitality. For generations the marsh men used to shoot the young and sell their flesh as venison in the towns; yet the herd continued to breed in its secret places in the wilds, and now that the shooting of them is strictly prohibited it is increasing—a testimony to the immense extent of the waste lands as well as to the mild climate of this province. What the camels do when the valley is flooded no one knows, but they must go to some place of refuge, for every one knows what happens to the cattle if they are caught by the flood.

Some years ago a ten months' drought was broken by a terrific thunderstorm which in one night raised the Guadalquivir many feet. A friend of ours had some eight hundred cattle herded on the Isla Mayor, a large island in the river about halfway between Seville and San Lucar. They were caught by the flood water, although it did not rise high enough to sweep them away. Next morning over four hundred of them lay dead, not from drowning but from the sudden chill, which their frames, weakened by the long drought and by struggling against the rush of water, were unable to resist.

In Tartessian times the cattle of the famous breed of Geryon, afterwards dedicated to the new deity adopted by the Tartessians and known as Hercules, used to feed in the valley of the Guadalquivir, or river Tartessus. But their pasturage area cannot have been anything as large as it is now, for we are told that the river was like a great lagoon then, and contained a chain of islands, great and small, on which the Tartessian cattle fed and bred, to the great profit of their owners. There must have been, however, plenty of shallows and elevations formed by the ever-growing alluvial deposits of the river, for Strabo tells us that twice every day, when the tide came up from the sea, the Tartessian cattle of their own accord left the lower pastures and took refuge on the higher ground of the islands.

In the annals of a sixteenth-century Sevillian writer I find a note to the effect than when Hercules first came up the Guadalquivir he discovered Seville itself lying on an island in the middle of the river, and called it the City of Poles, because it was built on piles. Afterwards, say our non-critical chroniclers, Hercules and his "brother" Atlas decided to build the "great city" on the highest point of the same islands, and replaced the "poles" by more solid material.

Down to the seventeenth century these ingenuous legends were so firmly believed by the Sevillians that no sceptic dared risk a broken head by disputing them. And indeed to this day we see three granite monoliths on the precise spot indicated as that chosen by Hercules, after consultation with Atlas, for the erection of his temple. They are still commonly known as the Columns of Hercules, although half a century or so ago an intelligent municipality, for no apparent reason, elected to change the name of the street to Marmoles, which means not granite but marbles.

With the gradual spread of knowledge the legend of Hercules and the city he built here became discredited, until after the seventeenth century it was dismissed as a ridiculous myth without any foundation. But the silly "common" people went on calling their monoliths "The Pillars of Hercules," because, as they could not read or write, the antiquarian discussions of the Sevillian professors did not affect their traditional beliefs.

And now comes the point of my story. Three or four years ago a worthy man of business, who knew nothing and cared less for any of the theories of the learned gentlemen who decided what was or was not to be believed in Seville, began to dig for his own purposes near the place which tradition marks as chosen by Hercules for the site of his city. And to his annoyance he found one layer of ancient buildings below another, until he had got some twenty-seven feet down below the level of the present street of Marmoles, in his search for firm foundations on which to build new shops. Here he found subterranean galleries, man high and wide enough for two men to walk abreast, built of stone and of that indestructible cement which seems to have been the secret of Tartessus, together with small broken columns of the same granite and the same cutting as those three of Hercules, twenty of whose forty feet still project from the top of this same hill. And now it seems clear that this was the lost city of Tharsis, whose site has so long been a mystery.

Subterranean galleries, the purpose of which has not yet been discovered, are found beneath all this quarter of Seville. One begins to see that the sixteenth-century Heraclean legend may have had some foundation in fact, and that the worshippers of Hercules or his forerunner Geryon may literally have substituted these galleries of masonry for the perishable foundations of the prehistoric "lake-dwellings" built on poles. This view is supported by Don Carlos Cañal, Deputy to Cortes, who wrote a book on *Prehistoric Seville* twenty years or more ago, before the discoveries in Crete had revolutionised the science of archæology.

Some portions of the Tartessian galleries still exist in a state of perfect preservation; but these are under the highest part of the town, where floods could never have come, and I think must have been built for some of the mysteries of the Tartessian sun-worship, relics of which one finds elsewhere. Others, at a lower level, seem as if they must have been intended to afford free passage to the water of the river.

One most interesting and perfectly accessible gallery is unluckily private property, and it is exceedingly difficult to get permission to visit it. I have done so three times, thanks to the insistence of a priest as keen about archæology as I am. But it was sorely against the grain of the owner.

He is a middle-aged gentleman who has never in his life ventured down the staircase which was built to give access to the labyrinth, as it is called, when it was accidentally discovered in the sixteenth century. On my first visit I went down the twenty-seven feet to the floor level of the galleries with the owner's son, an intelligent lad keenly interested in the strange place. Although it is pitch dark, it is perfectly ventilated through invisible openings to the upper air, the outlets of which have long been lost sight of, and we easily made our way from one circular chamber to another by the light of candles along the barrel-shaped passages, which are of convenient width and more than a man's height, and I was delighted at finding such an opportunity for study at my own door, as it were.

But alas! I had reckoned without my host. Before we had been there ten minutes that gentleman began to shout from the head of the stairs for us to come back—

"You have been down there quite long enough. You will get lost in the dark. You will catch pneumonia in the cold and the damp. Come up! Come up! I insist! I command! My son, why do you not obey me? I will not have you catch pneumonia. You have had more than time to see everything. There is nothing to see. For thirty years I have lived here and I have never gone down. The place is of no importance whatever. You must come up at once."

Not for a moment did he stop shouting. At first the boy told me to pretend I did not hear, and to pay no attention to his father's protestations, but very soon he said he dared not remain longer, and that if I would come up now he would take me down again the day after to-morrow, by which time he would talk his father over into letting us stay below as long as we wished.

Again, alas! With much protest I was allowed to go down again the day after to-morrow, as arranged, but the shouts to "come up!" were more continuous and more insistent than ever, and little work could be done.

Once more, some months later, I wrung a reluctant permission from the owner to take down a distinguished architect, but the only time we were allowed to enter the sacred precincts was at eight in the morning, when the friendly son, uninformed of our visit, was safe in bed. Two ancient female servants were sent down to see that we did not get into mischief, while for a whole hour the owner shouted that if we had any regard for our health we would not linger in that dangerous darkness.

When next I saw the boy, who was anxious to have the place scientifically studied, he told me that his father was determined to refuse all further applications for permission to visit this almost unique survival of a vanished civilisation.

"And to make quite sure that I shall not open the door when he is out of the way," said the lad, "he now keeps the key in his pocket all day and sleeps with it under his pillow."

Such is the encouragement given to archæologists in Seville.

It seems clear that the inhabitants of a town built on the principle of a prehistoric lake-dwelling, but having solid stone galleries instead of piles for its foundations, would have little to fear from floods. And it is the case that from the dawn of Spanish history until after the reconquest in 1248 we find nothing to suggest any serious trouble of the kind. But from then onwards we hear more and more of the increasing ravages wrought by the water, and these can only be attributed to persistent neglect of the hydraulic engineering works which the Seville Arabs and Mozarabs had carried to such perfection.

Triana, the potters' suburb of Seville from time immemorial, although now to some extent protected by wharves, lies considerably below the level of even a moderate flood. Probably in old times it was all built on galleries and arcades, and even now the main street has ancient arcades on either side for some little distance. The road between has risen so much that one column, perhaps Roman, is only three or four feet high, and when the floods come the water quickly fills the ground-floor rooms to the ceilings. It is possible that this is an actual relic of the "City of the Poles," although of course rebuilt again and again until only the idea of the primitive part remains.

Triana is always the first quarter to be flooded and the last to be cleared when the river overflows, for the sewer outfalls are below the flood-level, and it seems impossible to close them against the weight of the flood water—moreover, when they are closed, the rain has no outlet and pools in the streets. Some day perhaps the petition of the 10,000 Trianeros, repeated year after year for goodness knows how long, will be attended to by the authorities in Madrid, and then the old river-bed (*la madre vieja*), which has been silted up for centuries, will be cleared out and used to carry off the flood water. But this obvious remedy has not yet been applied by the wisdom of the Ministers who rule Spain, and the terror that seizes upon all who live below the flood-level when heavy rains set in is a thing to be remembered.

In February 1912 we were living in a modern house in a low-lying part of Seville, some little way from the river. The ground floor of the house had been artificially raised about five feet above the level of the street, but if the river had risen two or three inches above the twenty-seven feet that it had reached the night before it began to go down, the whole street would quickly have been flooded, and we, like Triana, would have had to be fed by boat. All that night a violent thunderstorm raged, to add the finishing touch to our panic; for there was nothing now between Seville and the river save some improvised barriers hastily erected with sixty hours of incessant labour by the soldiers of the garrison, and against these the water was already streaming with force.

But our case, though serious enough, was nothing like so critical as that of many others, for it was at any rate not likely that the water would actually come into our house. A friend of mine, like scores of residents in Seville, has in her house a well of brackish water, and all these wells are fed in some way from the river bed. My friend knows that it is only the walls of the new wharves, built during the last twenty years or so, that keeps her well from overflowing whenever the river rises even a few feet. And once the wells in that part of the town overflow from the river, nothing can check the ingress of the water, for the whole district lies far below flood-level. Day and night for a week she kept on taking soundings, until during the last night, that of the thunderstorm, the water in the well at last began to rise, one metre . . . two metres . . . three metres. . . . By daybreak, notwithstanding all her prayers and vows to the Virgin, it was within six feet of the top, and was still rising rapidly.

"And then," said she, "at the last moment Our Lady answered my prayers."

The storm ceased, the sun came out, and before the tide turned at midday the flag was flying on the Torre del Oro to tell panic-stricken Seville that the river was going down. Indeed the change came only just in time, for the flood was within an ace of overlapping the frail temporary barriers which alone kept the water out of the main part of the town.

By that time Triana, on the opposite bank, had been for six days under water, with from six to nine feet of it in every single house. The whole of the river valley, from Cordova down to the mouth, was one vast inland sea. In the riverside villages hardly a house was above water. Algaba, the first village above Seville, was entirely submerged, and about 750 out of the 800 inhabitants, having nowhere else to go, were huddled together in the ancient tower which, the villagers say, was built expressly as a refuge when the river rises. Imagine 750 people shut up for a week in one small tower! As soon as it was possible to row against the subsiding stream, I went up with a boat-load of good Samaritans to carry help to some families we knew, and I shall never forget what I saw.

The fields were feet deep in silt, the spring crops ruined, the streets a mass of indescribable filth, the poor cottages, generally trim and sweet with frequent whitewash, were banked up with stinking mud. But the blazing February sun was streaming down on all the misery; gay-coloured clothes, blankets, mats, curtains, beds and bedding, were hung out to dry, the women were all hard at work with their whitewash and scrubbing pails, and an astonishing spirit of courage and philosophy pervaded the whole place.

From the moment they could get across the ferry, three families had been tramping into Seville —about a mile and a half of road, mostly under water—to get rations from the "English" soup kitchen, and it was to verify their incredible tales of distress that we had rowed up.

"Yes, it was quite true that there was hardly anything to eat. It was also true that there was no work at present, and thus the supplies of rice, garbanzos, and haricot beans given by the Señores were more welcome than words could say. But the good sun was shining and everything would soon dry up, and then the rich Señors Fulano and Mengano, who owned all the land round about, would have to employ every hand they could get to sow the fields over again, for they certainly would not lose a whole season's crops, and they would have to pay good wages too, for there would be work for every able-bodied man from Seville to Cordova. And thus, if God pleased, good might soon come out of their present misery."

One of the more prosperous women, who had a loft above her cottage—a great rarity in this single-storeyed village—and thus had been able to save her furniture, insisted on giving us hot coffee before we left, and indignantly refused to be paid for it. "It was the least she could do when we had been so good to them," she said, and she had a brazier burning so that we should not feel the damp of the room, which she had just finished whitewashing before we came.

We felt ashamed to demur at sitting for ten minutes in the kitchen, reeking with damp, where the family had to live, but we were shivering with cold before we could decently take our leave, and since then I have always wondered why the whole village did not die of fever and ague, instead of being noted for their excellent health.

The cheerfulness with which the disaster was met at Algaba was even more striking at Triana. Here those whose houses had two or three storeys all took refuge on the upper floors, and were fed from boats for the six days during which the suburb was under water. Rations for all were provided by the authorities, and no one here need have starved, although the organisation of supplies for some ten thousand people in this quarter alone, besides several thousands more in flooded streets on the outskirts of the town itself, was a task of no small difficulty. Every one fared alike, getting only bread and the plainest fare, but in sufficient quantities to keep body and soul together if each took no more than his fair share. Very few could get ferried through the flooded streets to the bridge into Seville, and indeed for a day or two wheeled traffic over the single bridge was forbidden, save to convey food, for the water was nearly up to the top of the arch, and the whole structure was threatened. Had the bridge gone, all Triana must have starved, for no boat could cross that raging torrent.

Few lives were lost, though house after house in the oldest and poorest quarters fell in, and in one case a whole family was shut up in an old building without a window to the street, and when they were discovered three days later two of the children were dead from cold and hunger. For it was very cold during those grey, sunless days. But the rescue work was as well organised as the commissariat, and the young vicar of the parish, Don Bernardo Guerra, who was working like a man, became the hero of the imprisoned Trianeros. He himself seemed quite unaware of his popularity; indeed, he said his people were angry with him because, "although he was working at relief so many hours a day that he had hardly time to eat or drink or sleep or pray, it was impossible to supply a hundredth part of their needs."

"But now that the sun is shining again, things are going better," he said. "Indeed, even during the worst of the bad week it was surprising how a fitful gleam of sunshine enlivened the inundated people. The Trianeros have a gaiety of spirit peculiarly their own, which never deserts them for long, and it was curious to see how it came out among the hundreds of refugees housed in our new school buildings. It was also very noticeable how the women preserved even there their habits of cleanliness and decency. None of them had more privacy than they could obtain by hanging up shawls and sheets to separate one family from another, and yet most of them contrived to keep their own little places tidy and comparatively comfortable. The gipsies, it is true, looked as if they were picnicking in a rag fair, but they kept together at one end of the big class-rooms, apart from the other refugees. And you would have smiled to see the girls dressing their hair as if for a *fiesta*, and even dancing while the young men sang to a guitar which one of them had saved from the wreck of his home. It was difficult to believe—when the sun shone for a few moments—what desolation there was outside. But when night fell the suffering was at its worst. The authorities managed to keep water, gas, and electric light going in the streets, but in the houses the fittings were all under water, and the darkness accentuated the distress. And then the pistol shots going off for help, and the difficulty of locating the sound along the flooded streets, and the fear of arriving too late to save lives . . . it was an experience one would not forget in a century."

Don Bernardo stopped speaking, with a look in his liquid-brown eyes as of one who sees a nightmare.

"But you did always get there in time?" I gently prompted; "what about the affair in the Calle Evangelio? I saw it mentioned in the papers. They said you got an ovation."

"The papers talk a lot of nonsense," said the priest, smiling once more. "It was nothing, and what credit there was is not mine. Now about those mattresses? How many more can you provide from the English Relief Fund? We are to get fifteen hundred from the Government grant, they tell me, but not until the money is paid, and I am wondering if it will come before next summer. Meanwhile the hundred sent by the English ladies have been a great boon, and there were also sixteen from a Spanish lady. But we want a thousand at once, for families who have lost everything and now are sleeping on the floors of houses which were under water a week ago. *Ay de mi de mi alma!* And all this suffering would have been prevented if the Government had agreed to the protective work on the old river bed last year!"

"But I want to know about the affair in the Calle Evangelio," I persisted, and Don Bernardo, always courteous, could not refuse to tell me.

"It was nothing — there were many such incidents. I was in bed. Tired? Well, perhaps; we do not sleep much just now. Suddenly I heard pistol shots, several, fired quickly one after the other, so I knew the danger was imminent. I ran to my window to call the boatman, who was supposed to be at my service day and night, but the poor fellow was tired out, and a long way off, at the far end of this long street. I could make out his boat, tied to a balcony. I guessed he had fallen asleep, or perhaps, for we are all human, was inside the house getting a drink. Do not blame him. Those who had stayed out all day in the cold wind and soaking rain knew well how pardonable was his lapse from duty. If there had been a cart or even a donkey I should have taken it without asking permission. But it was the middle of the night. I dared not wade; I am not tall, and the water was over three feet deep in my street. And then one of my neighbours, excellent fellow, roused like myself by the shots, offered to take me on his back. He is a fisherman, strong in the legs and much taller than I. Understand that he asked no reward; indeed, he refused payment from the funds that I hold for relief. He carried me on his shoulders to the boat, and the boatman came out quickly, very much ashamed. My fisherman began to rate him, but I said, 'Save your breath to help row, for I fear we may arrive too late.' We all three rowed very hard, and the current seemed like a giant's hand dragging back our boat. You see the embankment of the railway to Huelva causes the flood water to eddy in our streets. I do not understand engineering, but every one in Triana knows that the embankment is our ruin. It was planned by engineers in Madrid, and the protest of those who knew the river was not attended to. The poor people of Triana curse the embankment every time there is a flood, and this time they would have gone and torn it down with their own hands if they could have got to it without being drowned on the way. Well, we reached the Calle Evangelio at last. The shots were fired from a house with two storeys, and all the inhabitants had been living on the upper one since the flood began. The water was six feet deep in the street, and it was quite dark. We got them all into the boat from a balcony, except one man. He had to jump, for just as he was ready to climb over the rail the whole front of the house seemed to melt away. It had been undermined by the water, and fell in all at once. Yes, I suppose the poor people might all have been drowned, had the good God not woke the fisherman in time to go to their rescue. I was responsible in a certain sense, but I could not have got there in time but for him. Therefore, such credit as there was, should have been given by the papers to him, not to me."

On the last and worst day of the floods the King came to Seville with the Minister of Public Works; and then the poor Trianeros were glad they had not pulled down the railway embankment, for the first thing His Majesty did was to steam off along that line, across the waste of waters, to visit a village which lay with little more than its roofs above the flood. I watched the engine with its single carriage crawl over the bridge and along the embankment, very slowly, for there was no knowing what unseen damage might have been done by the turbid yellow flood below the rails and sleepers.

Everybody thought that as the King and the Minister had now seen for themselves the intolerable injury that the piece of bad engineering was inflicting on Seville, the necessary authority for the work on the old river bed would be given immediately. That was a year and nine months ago, and Don Bernardo and his colleagues have been making ceaseless efforts ever since to get the matter attended to. But we have had three different Ministries in power during these twenty-one months, and none of them has had time to think of such trifles as protecting the third most important port in Spain from devastating inundations. During November 1913 the port had twice to be closed to navigation, owing to the height of the flood water, and it would not be difficult to calculate how much money has thus been lost to the town, though no one who has not seen Triana flooded can estimate the cost in fear and anxiety to the fathers who cannot earn bread for their children, and the mothers who watch in hourly dread of the irremediable ruin of their homes.

But no one blames the King. They know it is no fault of his, for they saw him in Triana that February day in 1912, going from house to house in a cart or a boat and hoisting up provisions with his own hands, in baskets slung down from the balconies, and they watched him standing ankle deep in water at the rise of the bridge, insisting on visiting the streets that had suffered most.

"God knows no one street had suffered more than another," said the journeyman potter who told me this, "for all were under water alike. 'What a terrible disaster!' said the King. His gentlemen tried to hold him back, for they had to follow where he led, and they did not want to get their feet wet. But they might as well have tried to hold the river back. He is a *King*! He gave two thousand pesetas then and there, and he sent twenty thousand more from Madrid as soon as he got back. But the best thing of all was the King's Kitchen. He ordered free hot meals to be served at his expense every day and all day as long as the flood lasted, to every Trianero who chose to ask for them—no recommendations required, no religious conditions. The King said no one was to be asked a question: everybody who was hungry was to have a meal in his kitchen. It saved many lives. True, we all had bread from the Town Council, but we fathers could not take our share while the children were hungry, and we were weak from long fasting, for you must understand that many of us had been out of work for a month, owing to bad weather, before the river overflowed. What a bad time God gave us this winter! But, thank God, there is work for all Triana now, for there are so many houses to be repaired and rebuilt that we cannot make bricks fast enough, and the masters have had to raise our wages."

Soup kitchens, or as the Sevillians call them, "Economical kitchens" (*cocinas economicas*), are little used here in times of public distress. It never seems to occur to the wealthy Sevillian ladies that with a very little trouble and organisation they could easily start private soup kitchens in their own houses, if only for the friends and relations of their numerous *ménages*. Of course, when the floods came, a soup kitchen was the first idea that occurred to some members of the English colony, and within twenty-four hours of the inundation of Triana, Mr. Keyser, our Consul, together with myself and a few other ladies, had collected enough money among our personal friends to supply two hundred rations a day for a fortnight.

The distribution took place in our house, because our patio happened to be the most convenient for the purpose, and all our servants, like those at the Consulate, worked double tides throughout the fortnight, so that none of the Relief Fund should be spent on extra hands. At first we only intended to feed families connected with the English business houses, but we soon found that it was impossible to lay down hard-and-fast rules. One afternoon a man who had been waiting an hour for what might remain after the privileged people were fed, dropped in a dead faint on the floor, and it took half an hour to bring him round. After that we ladled out our soup as fast as we could to every white-faced shivering creature that presented himself, without asking for his subscriber's card, not wishing for a repetition of the fright that seized us when the man fainted, for on that occasion it looked for a while as if our very small amount of red tape was to cost a life.

We got up to five hundred rations a day before we closed our soup kitchen, and even then had money left to buy the hundred mattresses and pillows that were so useful to the Triana priest—and all for a little over £60 in English money. True, the mattresses were very cheap, for a maker of them contributed to the relief by selling us all that we asked for considerably below cost price—a practical form of charity that greatly appealed to the people. But if we had spent £6000 instead of £60 we could not have met with more gratitude. It was not so much the quantity or the quality of the soup, our parish priest explained. It was having it ready at the precise moment when it was wanted, for the thing was put in hand very promptly, and we got in ahead even of the King's Kitchen. Strange though it may seem to English people, accustomed to organised charity, no other private individual or private association in Seville adopted this simple means of providing hot meals at a minimum of cost.

But we had no idea of the fame we were acquiring—indeed, we had no time to think of how our modest effort might strike the public. So we were surprised and amused when the editor of a local weekly paper sent round his photographer to get an illustration for an article on the "noble initiative of the English ladies." We told him we preferred to remain in retirement with our kettles. But he pointed out that a photograph of our truly "economical" kitchen would encourage the ladies of Seville to go and do likewise when another occasion should arise; and after that we could not of course refuse to be immortalised with our tin pots about us, if only to show how easily five hundred people could be fed from a dozen petroleum tins boiled on gas rings. And having got his photograph and published his little article, our philanthropic editor proceeded to offer each of our helpers a copy of the photograph at three times the market price!

Another pretty speech brought further evidence, were it wanted, of the popular feeling towards the young Queen. We set aside a little of our money to redeem pawn-tickets in the case of two or three families who had been comparatively well-to-do before the floods and now only needed respectable clothing to obtain good employment again, and, of course, this was to be obtained much more cheaply by taking their own garments out of the Mont de Piétè than by buying new for them.

One of the poor women said with tears in her eyes as she handed me a sheaf of the depressing little papers—

"Oh, Señora Elena, you are like the Queen!"

I smiled at the remark, for although it has long been the fashion for Spanish gallants to tell English girls they resemble the Queen when they want to offer the greatest flattery, I could not imagine how even the most fervent gratitude could find any resemblance between an old woman with white hair and the beautiful young Queen.

"Not in face, Señora, although you too are *muy guapa* (very attractive), but in generosity with the pawn-tickets. Have you not heard what the Queen did in that way? A very poor woman of Triana threw a whole bundle of tickets into the Queen's carriage one day when she was driving through Triana, and instead of being vexed, the Queen sent down to Juana's house after she got back to the palace to see if it was true that she had sold everything. And it was quite true, and the Queen redeemed her tickets and afterwards many more for other women, when she learnt of cases of great distress for which the women were not to blame. I wish the rich knew how helpful it is to redeem our pawn-tickets, for many of our clothes and especially our boots are very good when we 'put them away,'—indeed, if they are not good the Mont de Piétè will not give us anything for them."

Nor was this the end of the compliments paid us; for a few days later our man-servant came to tell me that he had been asked for the full names, family and baptismal, of all the English ladies who had helped to serve the soup, the same having been requested by a popular performer of "Flamenco" songs at a certain music-hall.

"But I refused to tell him," said our man proudly. "Having been in England with the Señores and knowing English customs, I informed him that compliments in your country had to be paid in a roundabout way, and that if your names were mentioned he would offend instead of pleasing."

"But what in the world did he want to know our names for?" I asked, completely mystified.

"*Por Dios*, Señora! Don't you know that a couplet in praise of the English economical kitchen is sung every night at the Blankblankblank, along with one about the King's Kitchen and the brave deeds of Don Bernardo Guerra? Señora! That song has been the most popular item in the programme for many nights past, and for that reason Pepito wanted to improvise a second couplet giving all the ladies' names. But don't be anxious: I assure you I refused with quite sufficient coldness to make him understand that he was taking a liberty."

The joke of it was that the Blankblankblank is a well-known café chantant in Seville which has been for years a stone of offence to Mrs. Grundy, both the English and the Spanish variety, and well-behaved members of society like ourselves would not have set foot inside it for worlds. Of course our disapproval, even if they had been aware of it, would not have troubled the café chantant people at all, but we felt rather as if those black sheep were heaping coals of fire on our respectable heads, when we learned that songs about our civic virtues were delighting crowded houses every night. But at any rate we were in good company, with the King on one side and the parish priest on the other.

And thus on a note of comedy closed our part in the tragedy of the greatest floods ever known in the long annals of the devastation wrought century after century by the Guadalquivir.

PART IV.—SPRING

CHAPTER XVI

Popular monarchs—King Alfonso and the washerwoman—Royal charity—No bull-fight required—Reaction against the bull-ring—A monarchical republican—The guardian of the polo ground—The King introduces the Queen—A loyal old gardener—The grief of Enriqueta—The King at Ronda—A lucky donkey-driver—Careful rioters—*Viva el Rey!*

I AM often asked by visitors whether the English Queen is popular in Spain, and I always wonder why such a question should occur to them. How could she fail to be popular, with youth, beauty, and a kind heart to give an extra gilding to her crown?

As a matter of fact, the longer one lives in Spain and the more one sees of the peasantry and the working classes in general, the more delightful tales one hears of the private dealings of the King and Queen and the rest of the royal family with the "common" people; and as very few of these have been published in the English papers, it seems worth while to put them on record before they are forgotten. I do not vouch for their literal truth, but I hardly think such stories would be current coin unless they had some foundation in fact, and in any case the people believe them to be true, and thus they illustrate the popular feeling towards the Royalties.

GOING HOME FROM THE MARKET.

Perhaps the story of King Alfonso and the washerwoman is already a chestnut, although I have never seen it in print. It dates from the days when motors were comparatively in their infancy, and the young King kept his entourage in a state of chronic nervousness by his devotion to the new machine, which in the opinion of the timid might run away or blow up at any moment. One winter afternoon the King did not return at the time he was expected, and there were serious thoughts of sending out a detachment of the Civil Guard with an ambulance in search of the errant motor. When His Majesty appeared, his lateness was explained by his having picked up a lame old laundress laden with clean linen, some little way out of Madrid, and taken her in his motor to the residence of her employers before he came home.

Possibly this may be one of Ben Trovato's stories, but I can myself quite believe it, having heard at first hand of many other incidents showing the same impulsive kindness to the poor and lowly, and the same disregard of convention and regal state.

Not only the King and Queen, but also the Queen-Mother and other members of the royal family have at one time or another picked up unfortunates who had met with accidents in the streets, and conveyed them to their homes or to a hospital. On one occasion Queen Christina sat for half an hour on a bench in the park at Madrid, while her motor took an unlucky cyclist to hospital. He was a student who had cut his head badly, and the Queen herself directed her servants to lay him as comfortably as possible on the cushions, after binding up his wounds with her own hands.

The Infanta Isabel, aunt of King Alfonso, recently delighted the crowd by an action which is less common now than it was a century ago. True, the vehicle was a fashionable motor, instead of a great royal coach as formerly, but the inspiration was the same.

The Princess on her afternoon drive met a procession carrying the Viaticum from one of the minor churches to a dying person. She got out of her motor, made the priest get in with his sacred burden, and herself walked to the sick man's house in the procession behind the Host, carrying a lighted candle. She is a great favourite in Spain, especially among the amateurs of the bull-ring, for her devotion to the national sport is so warm as to compensate them for the unconcealed distaste of some other members of her family.

The King and Queen seldom go to a bull-fight, although when they do appear at one the fact is so freely advertised, and photographs of their Majesties are so widely circulated by those interested in maintaining the "sport," that probably the outside world believes that they are devoted to it. It is of course impossible that those who love horses and are themselves skilled in horsemanship should have any sympathy with an entertainment in which the mangling of horses is an essential feature, although a King and Queen may sometimes have apparently to condone what they cannot approve. But their real feeling may be judged from a little incident which I had from an excellent authority—the private secretary of the man to whom the King spoke.

The occasion was a visit from their Majesties to a certain town which is renowned for its bull-fights, and has the reputation of producing the best *toreros* in Spain. The Alcalde presented his programme of festivities for the King's approval, and, pointing out one or two vacant dates, asked—

"When would you like to have the bull-fight, sir?"

The King replied that he and the Queen had come for a holiday, and did not wish to have every day filled up in advance; "and therefore," said his Majesty, "when I want a bull-fight I will ask for it."

The Court spent a whole month in that town, and no bull-fight took place.

Of course this, like everything else in Spain, is a political question. The Reactionaries, true to their principles, support existing institutions, while the Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals, Republicans, both reforming and revolutionary, Socialists, etc., all combine to denounce what they regard as one of the main factors in the *atraso de España* (the backwardness of Spain).

Foreigners who object to the bull-fight must bear in mind that an immense amount of money is sunk in it, by the owners of large estates who breed the bulls, in the building and upkeep of the bull-rings, and in the very costly apparatus of the show, and it is only natural that capitalists should fight for the institution in which their money is invested. When foreigners indignantly ask why the King does not put a stop to the barbarous "sport," if it be true that he dislikes it, they do not realise that a constitutional King, however radical a reformer he may be, cannot by a stroke of the pen destroy the vested interests of a great and powerful section of the community. To suggest that King Alfonso should arbitrarily close all the bull-rings would be something like proposing that the King of England should, *propio motu*, close all the music-halls, regardless of the rights of the shareholders. And the bull-fights can at any rate plead a venerable antiquity. Their origin is not certainly known, but it is possible that they date from the days of the Liby-Tartessians, when Minos ruled and encouraged bull-fights in Crete.

What is new is the reaction against the ring, which is spreading with encouraging rapidity. One of the greatest virtues of Isabel II., in the opinion of her time, was that she "was very fond of the bulls," and even now old ladies and gentlemen of that unlucky Queen's generation speak of her affection for the bull-fight as one of her redeeming qualities. Whereas not the least of King Alfonso's acknowledged claims on the respect and sympathy of the Radical and Republican sections of his subjects (and these include the mass of the working classes) is his obvious preference for other and more manly forms of sport.

The republicanism of the peasant is a curious and interesting study, and I always love to draw him out on the subject. One day when I was digging in the mountains a heavy shower came on, and I took shelter with my workmen in a chambered tomb that we had been clearing. How the subject of the Monarchy came up between them I did not notice, for I was absorbed in a dramatic shifting of the storm-scene as I saw it framed by a rough opening in the rock where a fallen stone had revealed the existence of our burial cave. The hills had been purple, almost black, against the thunder-clouds, when suddenly there was a rift in the over-cast sky, a streak of sunshine shot out, and through the pouring rain a great sheet of silver appeared like magic on the distant hillside, where an instant before all had been unrelieved gloom. It was only a patch of grey rock, but it was transformed by a cascade of rain-water from the peaks above into a thing of ethereal beauty which vanished as quickly as it had appeared.

A small boy—a goat-herd in his Sunday best on his way to a fair in the neighbouring town—had taken shelter with us in the cave, and at the men's request had been singing the local songs in a shrill treble for my benefit; and when my thoughts began to wander from the company to that glorified hill-side, he was wailing a love-song of which I could not make out a word. It was rather a shock to me to be brought back to earth by hearing the gentlest and most courteous of my two diggers remark that he wished he had the King and the Alcalde of the town together in the cave, so that he might throttle them both.

He explained that the Town Council owed him a considerable sum of money for a contract carried out by his father (recently dead) and himself, and his view was that if the King really was up to his work he would long ago have made an end of corruption and jobbery, and would have replaced the existing bureaucracy with honest men, who would pay poor labourers what they owed them instead of buying motors for their private amusement. And as the King had not done this, let him be throttled, or if not that, at least let us have a republic and make him the President of it.

Poor Ramón! He was suffering from a bad attack of political indigestion, and no wonder, for the unpaid bill, amounting to some hundreds of pesetas, meant a very heavy loss to a young man who had to support a widowed mother and various young brothers and sisters. I gave him a note of recommendation to the Alcalde, whom I knew to be rather better than most of his class, and I hope he got his money when the next pay-day came. But I sadly pondered over the state of Spain, administered on a system which poisons every limb of the body politic and makes it almost impossible for the local authorities to pay their workers and at the same time meet the demands of the blood-suckers who live without working, while they pull the strings that make the office-holders dance to their piping.

In a country where politics permeate and pollute everything it is not easy to keep clear of them, but I have heard many little anecdotes of the King and Queen which fortunately are free from that taint; and if most of them relate to Seville, my excuse must be that most of my life in Spain has been spent in that city.

About a mile outside the town there is a large expanse of meadow land alongside the Guadalquivir, known as the Tablada, which has played a part many times in Andalucian history.

Here grazed the long-horned Tartessian cattle mentioned in the last chapter. Here Julius Cæsar reviewed the native militia when the natives of Hispalis enlisted under his banner after refusing to open their gates to Varro, the lieutenant of Pompey. Here the offspring of Witiza, the last legitimate King of the Visigoths, grew rich as they cultivated the fertile plain and built ships to carry on that profitable trade with the East which made Ishbiliyah rich under the rule of Witiza's descendants, who amicably intermarried with Arab princes and ruled the land under nominal subjection to the Sultans of Cordova. Here the Northmen, ten centuries ago, after sailing up the river, were repulsed when they tried to set fire to the town. Here Saint Fernando set up his camp when he besieged Seville in 1248 and spent a year and a half in the vain endeavour to effect an entrance through the imperishable walls which were first built somewhere about the time that Minos brought bull-fighting into fashion.

True the Carthaginians conquered Tharsis, sacked and destroyed the city of their rivals the Greco-Tartessians (who in recent centuries had twice possessed themselves of Cadiz), and even deprived Tharsis of its name, adding it to that of Cadiz by way of an extra jewel in the Gaditanian crown. But the encircling wall defied their vengeance, and although they may have made a breach here and there they could not destroy it, for the "cob" of pre-Roman Spain is as hard as stone, and luckily for posterity the Carthaginians did not know the uses of dynamite.

Unless aided from within, none of her enemies ever got into Seville until the walls fell into disrepair. Even Marshal Soult would hardly have found the siege of Seville such a farce as he did, but for the ruinous condition into which Spanish neglect had allowed the fortifications to decline. True he did not have to encamp on Tablada to starve the town into surrender, as did Saint Fernando, but the inhabitants had time to hide a good many of their treasures, artistic and other, in the subterranean vaults and galleries which have existed since Tharsis was built, before the French general battered down their gates.

The plain of Tablada is now a busy place, for right across it a great canal is in course of construction, which, coupled with a further deepening of the channel of the river, will open Seville, some fifty miles inland, to steamers of over 10,000 tons and make it the principal port in Spain, except perhaps Barcelona.

But part of this plain is devoted to sport of different sorts, and here a polo ground is laid out when the Court comes to Seville. Thus here, as in Moguer, my little anecdotes are linked to a thread of history, and this long digression has more object than at first appears.

A certain old man had been appointed gatekeeper to the entrance to the Tablada sports ground, because his son, a *torero*, had been killed in a bull-fight and the bulls destined to die in the Seville ring are always enclosed in a field at Tablada a day or two before the fight. He was a conscientious old man and never deserted his post, even when all the town turned out to receive the King and Queen on their arrival from Madrid. They had an exceptionally enthusiastic reception that year, because King Alfonso had recently granted a large piece of ground from the Alcazar gardens to give access, light, and air to a poor quarter packed away behind the lofty walls of the palace; and it was a good deal of a sacrifice on the part of the old man to go out to Tablada at the usual time instead of shouting *Vivas* with his friends at the station first: but he had his reward in a little-expected shape.

A few days after the arrival of the Court, word was sent to our friend that he must be extra careful to admit no unauthorised persons to the enclosure, because their Majesties would be driving out in the course of the afternoon to see the polo ground preparatory to a match fixed for the next day. So when a young man whom he did not know galloped up, slightly dishevelled from riding fast in a stiff wind, the gatekeeper flatly refused to open the gate, saying in explanation that the King and Queen were coming.

"Do you know the King?" inquired the rider.

"No; nor the Queen either," answered the old man, "and I only wish I did, for my grandchildren plague the life out of me every day asking whether I have seen her and whether she is as beautiful as everybody says."

"Well, now you will be able to tell them," said the horseman, "for here she comes."

Up drove the Queen, and the old man thereupon became aware that his interlocutor—as of course my readers have guessed—was the King himself, for he proceeded to tell her of the conversation in a way that made her laugh heartily.

"And now that you have seen the Queen, what shall you tell your grandchildren? Is she as beautiful as everybody says?" asked the King in the best of humours, for, as all the world knows, nothing pleases him more than these spontaneous evidences of the admiration bestowed on his wife.

"More, more, a thousand times more," stammered the old man, quite abashed.

The royal cortége waited while the Queen asked about the children, how many there were, what were their ages, and why they lived with their grandfather. And on hearing how they had been orphaned and were dependent on his modest earnings at the gate, the King gave him a bank-note—which could not have been less than twenty-five pesetas, for that is the smallest paper money, and may have been more —telling him to let the children have a feast of cakes and chocolate by which to remember the Queen.

It is pretty to see the real affection inspired by this brilliant young couple even in the humblest of their entourage.

While the piece of ground given to the town was being cut off from the palace gardens, there was for a week or more a long space by the new road which was open to the world at large, for although the work was pressed on with all speed, a high and strong wall had to be built, and that could not be run up in a moment. It was January, and very cold for Seville, and one day when I walked round the gardens I missed the oldest of the gardeners, who with his chubby, cheerful daughter are particular friends of mine.

It appeared that old Toro was crippled with a serious chill, and could only just hobble across from his cottage to the place where the building was going on, where he was acting as watchman until the new wall was finished.

"How has he managed to get ill just now?" I asked, for he was a sturdy old fellow whom no amount of work ever seemed to tire.

"It is because he has been up for several nights, keeping guard over there," explained his daughter. "The Town Council put on two extra policemen, but my father thought they were not enough to make sure that no bad characters got in in the dark, for it is a long piece of road as you see, and he was not going to have bad characters in His Majesty's garden if *he* could help it."

"Well done, Toro," said I; "I know how loyal he is to the King, and I hope he will get a handsome tip for his extra care."

"Oh no, he didn't do it for that, it is purely voluntary; and anyhow he won't get anything, because the Señor Marqués (the Governor of the Alcazar) doesn't know anything about it. You may be sure my father is not going to tell him. And please, Doña Elena, don't say anything to my father about it, for he would be angry with me for telling you. He feels he is only doing his duty."

One admires the King whose kindness to his employés secures such unselfish affection, and one admires the high ideal of duty which leads an old man nearer seventy than sixty to stop out of doors all night for a week at a stretch to guard his royal master's garden. I do not know if Toro's devotion ever reached the King's ears, but I fear not, for the last time I saw chubby Enriqueta she was in tears because, owing to extensive alterations in that same garden, the house she and her father had lived in for so many years was to be pulled down and they had to seek a new abode outside of the precincts.

She cheered up, however, as I led her back to talk about the royal family, always her favourite subject of conversation.

She adores the little Prince of Asturias, and related with pride how she had long ago heard him talking in English to his pony. "He was hardly four years old, and yet he could already talk in a language I did not understand!"

But her most cherished recollection relates to a day of alarms and excursions when, owing to some political crisis, the Court left Seville at a few hours' notice, a day or two earlier than had been intended.

"I have never been employed inside the palace," said Enriqueta, "only to wash table linen and such-like here in our own laundry. But that day every one was so busy that we were all called to help with the packing. There are certain things that the Queen herself directs the packing of, and one of her ladies told me to carry a tray of silver and spoke rather sharply because I was slow with it, being unused to such delicate work. And a voice behind said in the kindest tone, 'Don't scold the poor girl; I am sure she is doing her best.' And there was the Queen herself, who had come to see if the silver was ready! We would all go down on our knees to serve their Majesties, who have kind words for everybody, and it is a deep grief to me that when we live away from the palace I shall have no chance of serving the Queen even by washing her table linen."

I heard a pleasant story of the King at Ronda, which he visited a year or so ago on his way from a military review at Algeciras.

The Alcalde, although of noble birth, was very old and had not been to Court for so long that he had even forgotten how to address his King. He began by taking the seat of honour in the carriage, and when the King asked him the depth of the Tajo—that tremendous cleft in the rock through which flows the Guadelevín—he replied that he did not know. The Tajo is the pride and glory of all good Rondeños, for the gorge has a sheer drop of between five hundred and six hundred feet, and great was the indignation of the town when the Alcalde's indifference to those all-important local statistics became known.

The King was driven up to the new hotel, the Reina Victoria, on the crest of a hill where the Tajo opens out into a fertile valley. And here the Alcalde seems to have set his royal guest down and left him to his own devices, without so much as having a glass of wine set before him.

Later in the day a poor muleteer, toiling up the winding path which leads from the flour mills below to the "old town" on the top of the hill, was accosted by a strange young gentleman who, with a companion, was beginning the ascent. No one is more responsive to a pleasant greeting than the Andalucian peasant, and the *arriero* at once slipped off his donkey in order to carry on the conversation more comfortably on foot.

"I suppose you gentlemen, being strangers, got a sight of the King this morning," said he. "They say he is very *simpático*, and very good to the poor."

"I am glad to hear that," said one of the strangers, "but haven't you seen him yourself?"

"Not I," said the *arriero*; "I can't afford to lose my day's wage merely to enjoy myself, and I have no chance of seeing His Majesty unless he comes down into the Tajo to look for me."

They climbed on up the stony zigzag path, and presently the young man asked the *arriero* if the donkey could carry his weight, for he found walking up the almost vertical hill rather hard work.

"Of course he could get on the donkey, and welcome. Castaño often carried two hundredweight of potatoes up to the town, and the Señor certainly did not weigh that. He, Castaño's owner, thought very little of climbing the hill several times a day when there was a lot of produce to take to market, but he could understand that a *forastero* [stranger—any one not belonging to the speaker's native place] who was not used to the Tajo might find it heavy walking."

So the gentleman got on the donkey, sitting on the panniers with his long legs dangling on each side of the beast's neck in true country fashion, and in this wise the little procession reached the new road recently made through a breach in the town walls to give an easy approach for motors.

Here the "stranger" dismounted and gave a gratuity to the *arriero* which left him speechless with surprise and delight, for it was more than a week's wages that he found in his hand.

"Thank you for my pleasant ride," said the gentleman. "And you can tell your friends that the King not only went to see you at the bottom of the Tajo, but was very glad to borrow your donkey to come up again."

When he left that evening King Alfonso is reported to have said that he would never forget Ronda, for it was the first place he had been to in all his life where he was neither offered nor asked for anything.

These are but a few of the many stories we hear of the King, the Queen, and their people, but they will suffice to show the estimation in which their Majesties are held, as well as some of the reasons for it. And to end the chapter I will add one incident in very modern history, which occurred as recently as November 1913, and is significant, it seems to me, of the present state of Spanish politics.

The tax known in France as the *octroi* and in Spain as the *consumos*, because it is levied on nearly everything that is consumed in the use,—*i.e.* food and firing,—bears heavily on the poor and causes more discontent than any other detail of local administration. It is very harshly enforced in many places, every box, basket, or bundle that enters the town being examined with irritating and unnecessary thoroughness. Every traveller has suffered from it on arrival at the railway station, and what is worse, one often sees weary labourers forced to unload and reload again their tired donkeys on their way home from work, because the *consumista* chooses to imagine that some article of food may be concealed under a hundredweight of charcoal or firewood. I have myself been detained in pouring rain at the entrance to a town after a long day on the hills, while a surly official poked and prodded the panniers of a mule laden with nothing more dutiable than ancient tiles, bricks, and such-like from my excavations. A shocking accident occurred, in connection with this tax, at a seaside village where we spent one summer; for a poor woman had put her sleeping infant in the panniers of her donkey, and the *consumista*, assuming without inquiry that they contained vegetables, ran the baby through with the long sharp spike used for testing the contents of a load that is not unpacked before them, and killed it on the spot.

At election times, when the whole country is greatly excited, the *consumos* grievance is always prominent, and the popular indignation is apt to explode in plain language about the Town Councils, for these have a legal right to substitute some other local tax for the *consumos*, if they choose to do so. Naturally the poor feel that they, in whose starvation wages every farthing is of importance, suffer more by a direct tax on food than do the rich, and thus it has become a class question, needing extremely delicate handling at critical moments.

In a modest village of two or three thousand inhabitants, in the province of Huelva, called Bolullos del Candado, feeling about the *consumos* had risen to boiling-point before the 1913 municipal elections began, and some mismanagement at the Town Hall led the malcontents to believe—perhaps justifiably—that the voting would not be fairly conducted. In less than no time some five hundred people collected outside the Town Hall, and the authorities, alarmed at their menacing aspect, locked the doors and ordered the Civil Guard to fire on the crowd. Infuriated by being shot at when they had done nothing wrong or illegal, the people burst in the doors, and a free fight ensued. When it ended they were masters of the situation, and then they sacked the Town Hall and made a bonfire of the furniture in the village square.

But before a hand was laid on the municipal property, one of the " rioters " took down a picture of the King, which hung in the council-room, and a detachment of them conveyed it to a place of safety, while the whole crowd shouted *Viva el Rey!*

It was the triumph of King Alfonso's personality over political passion, and shows, I think, that there is not much fear of a popular revolution against the Monarchy in Spain.

A REST AT THE FORD.

CHAPTER XVII

Music and the people—Arabic instruments—The *saetas* of Andalucia—The tango in the theatre—A working-class wedding—A drama in a dance—The alarmed widow lady—The Jota of Aragon—Our Lady of the Pillar—Spaniards in Morocco—Moors, savage and civilised—The Sultan and his prisoners—The tragedy of the Wolf's Gorge—After the retreat — The salvation of a regiment — The power of the guitar.

THE influence of the traditional popular music on the life of the people is perhaps in some ways more marked here than in any other country. It may seem strange to us that this should be the case, for Western ears find it difficult to catch the tuneless songs, with their curious intervals and lack of tonality and rhythm, which are another of Spain's legacies from the time when her arts and sciences were all Oriental. But the strange and to us pointless cadences of the Guajiras, Malagueñas, Granadinas, Sevillanas, and the rest offer no difficulties to the Andalucian, though even cultivated foreign musicians find them almost impossible of reproduction.

During the time of the Moslem rule in Spain, Seville was noted for its devotion to music; so much so that in the palmy days of the Khalifate, when for nearly a century Seville and Cordova were on good terms with each other, it was usual, when a rich man died in Cordova, to send his musical instruments to Seville for sale. But during the Moslem period music was cultivated everywhere in Spain, as is shown by treatises on the art existing in the library of the Escorial, and by the long list of instruments in use among the Arabs, some of which, or their counterparts, exist to-day, although others are now unknown. Among these were flutes made of bone and elegantly decorated with carved designs, an almost perfect specimen of which was found in a tomb at Malaga, besides fragments of two others in an excavation at Seville. Possibly the skill of the Andalucian on the military bugle is a legacy from those times, as also his fondness for drum and fife bands. The drum or tambor is of Oriental origin, and I have already described a variety of it known as the *zambomba*.

It is only to be expected that Arabic music should persist in the repertoire of the people of Andalucia, as indeed it does. But the most curious survival is not in the music of the theatre or the home, but in improvised hymns sung in the streets by fervent devotees when the images of Our Lord and His Mother are carried in procession during great religious festivals, such as those of Holy Week, Corpus Christi, or the patron saint of the locality.

The curious fact about these hymns is that while the music is Oriental, the name, *saeta*, is not. It means "an arrow" (Lat. *sagitta*), and the Spanish dictionary gives the other meaning, "a short hymn to excite devotion," without explanation. I think myself it must date from early Christian times, before the Arab conquest, for one can hardly suppose that the name was applied to these erotic outbursts or the hymns themselves composed after the reconquest of Seville. One has only to compare the hymns sung elsewhere at that period with the *saetas*, to see how widely they differ in feeling. Here are two lines from a thirteenth-century hymn by "Brother Henry of Pisa :—

> "Christ divine, Christ of mine,
> Christ the Lord and King of all."

And here are two lines from a *saeta* to Our Lady, of the traditional style improvised anew every year all over Andalucia when the people turn out to see a religious procession :—

> "Thou art the passion flower
> That opens for thy Son."

Even more exotic than the words is the ecstasy thrown into them by the singer. Suddenly in the midst of the reverential silence which falls on the laughing, chattering throng as the *Santos* are carried past, rises the pathetic minor cadence with which every *saeta* is prefaced, and as long as the hymn lasts those around stand still and listen. When it is over (it never extends beyond four or five lines) the singer is vigorously applauded, and the crowd again becomes mundane. The singer, who for a brief moment seemed absolutely lost to the things of earth, uplifted into unconsciousness of everything save the object of his adoration, his head thrown back, his eyes fixed on the image, and his whole body tense with pious emotion, comes straight down to earth again, and smilingly accepts the compliments of his friends.

The *saeta* is always a solo: not necessarily because it is improvised, for there are a few traditional couplets that everybody knows, but because no one attempts to sing a *saeta* unless and until the spirit moves him. And, the effusion being so short, it is all over before his hearers could catch and join in the air, even if they wished to do so.

It is not the least curious feature of these *saetas*, considering how infectious religious emotion has always been, that they are never turned into choruses by the crowd. Perhaps this is due to the Arabic strain in the people, for there seems to be nothing to indicate that the Moslem musicians combined their instruments to produce orchestral effects, and at the present time there is singularly little feeling for concerted music of any kind in Spain compared with other European countries. But the sympathy of the crowd with the singer, and still more with the subject of his song, is shown by the breathless hush with which they follow every trill and shake of the interminable recitative, so harsh and unmusical to our ears, but so beautiful to theirs.

To turn to another branch of Spanish popular music. The so-called Argentine tango is of course perfectly familiar here, and the echoes which have reached Spain of the animated discussion in the English press as to its morality or the reverse have caused a good deal of amusement; for as every one here knows, the propriety or otherwise of the tango —whether "Argentine" or Andalucian—depends entirely on the performer. It can be a graceful and inoffensive drawing-room dance, or it can be made an exhibition indecent enough to put a Solomon islander to the blush.

Of its Oriental origin there can, of course, be no doubt whatever, apart from the references in Spanish or Spanish-Arabic history to its parent the *zambra*, against which the Church more than once fulminated, apparently with very little effect. As for the improvised verses which in Andalucia accompany the tango, they are as changeable as are the movements of the dancer; but among the numerous printed couplets in my possession there is not a word which could offend the most squeamish.

I first saw the tango danced by a handsome gipsy at a public performance, and I am bound to say I never witnessed anything less graceful or more disgusting. That was in the early days of our residence in Spain, and we had stopped to see the end of the entertainment, unaware that everything that might offend the proprieties is always reserved to the last, and that the offence is likely to be considerable in the final scenes of a late function.

It is easy to avoid these when one knows the ropes, for theatrical shows are generally of the "triple bill" variety, and ladies may attend the pieces put on before eleven o'clock quite comfortably. Popular comediettas, musical or otherwise, are given from night to night at different hours, and varied to suit all tastes, being carefully Bowdlerised for the earlier audiences. A play called *Las Bribonas* (The Impostors—female) had an immense success one winter, and I went with a party to a performance which began at ten. It was amusing and well acted, but there was one scene which was decidedly vulgar, although not actually indecent. I happened to speak of it afterwards to two English friends who had seen it on different occasions. One, who went to an eight o'clock performance, found it food for babes; the other unfortunate lady, who in her ignorance had gone to the latest one, was almost too shocked to talk about it. The tango, it is hardly necessary to say, was one of the chief features in the doubtful scene in *Las Bribonas.*

The most amusing tango I ever saw was danced at the wedding of a servant of ours, who had politely fixed the day to suit the convenience of her Señores, so anxious was she to have the great event graced by our presence.

The mother was a well-to-do laundress who rented the whole of the ground floor of a small tenement house, and the guests overflowed from the patio into the bridal *sala* and *alcoba.* The *alcoba* or alcove is a recess curtained off from the sitting-room and furnished with a bed, which, in the homes of the poor, generally completely fills it. The same arrangement also obtains in the houses of the rich, and here it is usual for the mistress's bedroom to open out of the drawing-room, with the doors between thrown back and the curtains drawn aside to display the elegant appointments of the marital chamber. Although the other bedrooms are often lacking in what we should call common necessaries, this one is always furnished at least as handsomely as its corresponding *sala*, forming a striking contrast to the rest of the private rooms. The explanation is that, when a child is born, the mother receives her whole family, her husband's relatives, and all her intimate friends in her bedroom when the infant is twenty-four hours old; thus this room has to be at least as well furnished as the drawing-room; and the same custom prevails in all classes of society. It never seems to occur to the doctors or any one else that these social celebrations have anything to do with the excessive mortality among young wives and their babies, and I have often been pressed to go and sit with some unfortunate acquaintance, seriously ill after a bad confinement, when I have called to inquire for her and her child, on the ground that she had had only a few callers that day and as she was very weak my company would cheer her up.

The *alcoba* of Carolina, the laundress' daughter, just held the bedstead and a table with her *Santos*—a chromo-lithograph of a Murillo Virgin, flanked by a St. Anthony of Padua and a "San Juan de Dios," before which were placed vases of artificial flowers and, on this great occasion, a couple of lighted candles. All the rest of the bedroom furniture was in the *sala*. Here we were invited by the bride to drink Manzanilla, and as the guests of honour we (more fortunate than at Carmencita's wedding) each had a glass to ourselves. It was all clean and bright and gay, and when we went out into the patio Carolina's girl friends began dancing *seguidillas.*

It was a pretty sight to see them dancing under the February sky, with a brilliant moon irradiating the old courtyard and blending its beams with those of an electric bulb hanging from the crazy balcony, which was all the light a generous landlord provided for his twenty or thirty tenants. The thrumming of the single guitar was completely drowned by the hand-clapping and foot-stamping with which the spectators accompanied the dancers, but we did not miss it. Indeed, it would be a powerful instrument that could have made itself heard above all that rhythmical clatter. Personally I find the *palmas*, as this hand-clapping is called, very trying, for the noise is overwhelming; but that is because I have no Eastern blood in my veins. To Andalucians of whatever class, noise of any kind seems to be sheer delight.

Things gradually grew more lively as the slight restraint caused by our arrival wore off, although the guests were always perfectly well-mannered and decorous; and presently Carolina came to tell me that Juanillo Carrera, a famous singer and dancer, would perform the tango in her mother's kitchen, if the Señores would care to see him.

"Why would he not dance in the patio?" I asked, for I was enjoying the picture made by the moonlight.

"Oh, that would not suit the girls, who wanted to go on dancing themselves. But if we would step into the kitchen and would kindly not mind standing for a few minutes, Juanillo would dance on the table, so that the *señora viuda* (the widow lady) who came with the Señora, and so much likes Andalucian dancing, would see him to the best advantage."

Juanillo was a thin pock-marked man of forty or so, without a redeeming feature in his face save a pair of brilliant deep-set black eyes. He wore a striped cotton blouse and trousers with a black sash wound many times round his waist, and bright yellow boots with long pointed toes. I thought he looked an unfortunate specimen of the Andalucian dancer, but I soon found that appearances were deceptive in this as in so many other cases.

The widow lady, although no longer in her first youth, was tall, handsome, and very well dressed. She had been for days past expressing her desire to see this tango of which she had heard so much before she came to Spain, and I am afraid she rather hoped to be shocked by it. I saw the moment she came in that Juanillo admired her, and heard him remark to Carolina that she was *guapisima*, meaning extremely attractive. Carolina rapped him over the knuckles, unaware that I was watching, and told him to behave himself and remember that the tango was to be performed for distinguished ladies and must have nothing of the *corral* (low-class tenement house) about it; but I rather wondered what was going to happen.

He sprang on to the table with the graceful agility of a cat, and began the tapping with one foot which prefaces all these dances, his eyes meanwhile fixed on the widow, who as yet had not realised that she was his objective. Then suddenly, regardless of the din of voices, *palmas*, and stamping in the patio, he burst into song.

I could not catch all the words, but I heard enough to grasp their tenor. The rascal was addressing a passionate declaration of love to the American widow; and now his cavernous eyes began to light up, and even she, unconscious as she was of the meaning of his song, realised that he was looking very hard at her. And when he began the dance not only she but every one else in the room was made fully aware that the entire performance was wholly and solely addressed to her. I never saw a cleverer pantomime of devotion, jealousy, scorn, pride, humility, and final despair than the impudent scamp contrived to act by his movements in this tango. And all without moving from the middle of the kitchen-table on which he danced—indeed, if he had not kept to the dead centre of it he would inevitably have come down with a crash, for it did not measure over three feet any way. The whole thing was dramatic to a degree: one's attention was caught at the outset by the expression of his eyes, and he never allowed his hold on us to relax for an instant. His ugly face, shabby dress, and hideous yellow boots all fell into the picture, which was none the less effective because the only light was a flaring petroleum lamp held up by the bridegroom, whose delight in his friend's performance caused him to wave it about dangerously in his efforts to keep it, like the lime-light at a theatre, always on the dancer's face.

"I never saw anything so horrible in my life," murmured the widow in my ear when the tango came to an end. "Do let us go; I am quite frightened! The man looks as if he could commit a murder. No more tangos for me, thank you! I felt as if he might stick a knife into me at any moment."

She was really frightened, and, humour not being her strong point, I felt that it would be useless to try to make her see the joke of it. Dramatic expression comes naturally to the Andalucian, and I knew that Juanillo had taken her as the heroine of his pantomime simply because she was the most noticeable member of our party, expecting her to be as gratified as a Spanish Señorita would have been at the compliment. During the remainder of her stay the lady ceased from troubling me with demands to be taken to see the local dances; but when her nerves had recovered from the shock it became evident that not the least pleasing of her recollections of Spain would be the little comedy of admiration played by Juanillo. In that version of the tango there was nothing to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of modesty, but I imagine that it is not quite what is danced in London or Paris.

Another dance with its accompanying song, which is known, at any rate by repute, outside Spain, is the Jota of Aragón, the music of which does not seem to be of Oriental origin. No one attempts to decide when it first came into being, but the probability is that, like the "war dance" of the Basques, it dates from prehistoric times, when women were won not by favour but by force. Be this as it may, the Jota now is the hymn of Aragón as well as her national dance, and has the same extraordinary religious influence over the Aragonese as the *saeta* has over the Andalucians. Fully to appreciate its swing and dash one must hear it sung by a native of the province, but wherever and by whomsoever performed it sets the blood dancing when the refrain bursts out—

"*À la jota, jota,*
Que viva Aragón
Y la Pilaríca
De mi corazón."

(Sing to the jota,
Long live Aragón
And the Pilarica
Of my heart.)

The patron saint of Zaragoza, the capital of Aragón, is Our Lady of the Pillar (*Nuestra Señora del Pilár*), who is said to have come down from heaven when St. James was converting Spain, to encourage him in his holy labours. She sat, so the story goes, on a pillar while he said Mass before her, and he, as a good saint should, founded the Cathedral of Zaragoza on that spot, with the pillar of Our Lady as its shrine.

Zaragoza has two Cathedrals, one dedicated to N. S. del Pilár, and the other to Our Lord of the Seo (Aragonese for a cathedral church). The people will assure you that that of the Pilár is much the older of the two, regardless of their architectural styles, and it is quite possible that the black image of Our Lady is older than anything in the Seo, although when it comes to relics of the Mozarabic Church in Spain it is never wise to dogmatise about dates. Indeed, there are cases in which popular tradition has received material confirmation from unexpected sources long after it had been pronounced mere fantasy by the learned. The Cathedral of the Pilár, or as her adoring Aragonese love to call her, the Pilarica, is quite modern, whereas parts of the Seo date from before the twelfth century. But the actual image of Our Lady of the Pillar, with the column on which it stands, are of immemorial antiquity. The column had been so worn away by the kisses of the faithful that it is now protected by a case of silver and crystal. One may imagine the many centuries of devotion which must have gone by ere a stone could be thus impressed by the touch of human lips alone.

A singular performance takes place in Zaragoza every year on the 12th of October, the festival of the Pilarica, in which certain strange figures called *gigantes y cabezudos* take a prominent part. The giants represent a man, a woman, and a negro (not a Moor), while the big-heads (*cabezudos*), worn by men of ordinary height, seem to have no special meaning. I have tried in vain to discover the origin of this festival. It must date from before the reconquest of Zaragoza (which took place about 1120), for the negro would certainly have been a Moor had it been introduced after Zaragoza was incorporated with the dominions of the King of Aragón, but no convincing record exists. A replica of the Pilarica is borne through the streets, and the gorgeous procession of the Cathedral Chapter, the military, civil, and municipal authorities, all in their gala dress, the town band, and the devout of both sexes, carrying candles, is wound up by these singular survivals of some forgotten and probably pagan festivity. One of the fascinations of Spain is this intimate connection between the present and the past, with its picturesque and quite unintelligible jumble of the sacred and profane.

It is only natural that the love of the Pilarica, which is so bound up with the religion of the Aragonese, should colour every action of their daily life ; and an incident that took place during the war in Morocco in 1909 is a good illustration of this.

The Aragonese are good fighting men, and make excellent soldiers, although it is true that the same may be said of all the Spaniards. But there are times in every war when the martial spirit droops before human pain and the sorrow of seeing comrades cut down in the flower of their youth. Such a day came to the Spanish troops at Melilla when the fatal attack upon the mountain of Gurugú was made, to which I have already referred in connection with mourning customs.

So little was heard about it in England at the time, owing to the rigorous censorship, that I may be excused for briefly relating what I heard from one of those engaged in it, who was himself severely wounded.

When the trouble with Morocco began, the Spanish Government made the common mistake of underestimating the strength of the enemy. They had to deal with scattered tribes, some of them barbarians of the most savage description, others gentle, comparatively civilised, and quite ready to take advantage of the commercial and educational facilities afforded by contact with European nations.

Although they have no connection with the Pilarica and the Jota of Aragón, it may be of interest to tell two little stories which illustrate the wide difference between these two classes of Moors, for the facts speak for themselves.

In the summer of 1913 a Spanish gun-boat, the *General Concha*, went ashore in a fog on the Moorish coast, and a hostile tribe attacked the wreck. They shot down some of the sailors who tried to swim ashore, and after a plucky defence led by a junior officer, the captain and the senior lieutenant having been killed by the first volley, they got on board, looted the vessel, and took the survivors prisoners. To make matters worse, they had begun by pretending that they belonged to a friendly tribe, and thus had managed to get within close range of the boat without opposition, opened fire from the cliffs above, and shot down the two officers and several men before the crew could get the guns to work.

Naturally the gravest fears were entertained for the fate of the prisoners, but two or three weeks later it became known that through the influence of a friendly chief they had been taken to the house of one of his friends, where they were well treated and eventually aided to escape to a small boat hidden on the beach a few miles from their prison. The friendly Moors, besides guiding them to the boat, helped to row them out to a Spanish man-of-war which had been sent to bombard the coast villages. Not only had they been provided with the necessaries of life as long as they remained with the friendly Moors, but the women had done their best to cure the wounded, and thanks to them, only one—a case for amputation—failed to recover. And the Moors carried those who were unable to walk some twelve miles across the enemy's country to the boat, although they well knew that there would be short shrift for them and for the prisoners were the flight discovered.

So much for the "civilised" Moors. Now for the reverse of the medal.

A Spanish officer told me that he had himself seen the following incident, which was only one out of many that occurred during the eight years that he was quartered at Ceuta, whence in times of peace his work took him to various parts of the country.

The father of the present Sultan, who was opposed to any sort of change in his methods of government, used to make an annual "royal progress" from Fez to Morocco, and picked troops went before him to remove any possible source of danger to the monarch. He paid these men a dollar for a live prisoner and two for a dead one, so, said my friend, "you may imagine that more were brought in dead than alive." Any one who could be even remotely suspected of disaffection was promptly beheaded and his property confiscated. In a word, the "royal progress" was in fact a murderous raid, the loot of which paid for the upkeep of the troops and saved some collecting of extra taxes.

On one occasion my friend, in his official capacity, met the Sultan at a place where two hundred prisoners were marshalled in a row, each with a wooden collar round his neck, tied with a rope to that of the next man. As the Sultan rode up a poor woman flung herself on the ground before him, and clasped his horse's knees with such force that it could not move, crying that her son who was among the prisoners was innocent, and imploring that the collar be taken off his neck. The Sultan turned to the two negro executioners who accompanied him everywhere.

"Take off her son's collar," he said, "and his head with it, and give them to the woman."

And this was done on the spot.

"You will understand," said the officer who told me the story, "why we who have seen such things feel that we cannot abandon our civilising mission in Morocco, although it may be years before we get any material return for the blood and money it is costing us now. But," he went on to say, "every year we are making more friends among the tribes, and since 1909 we have been getting on very hopefully with our Spanish-Arabic schools and hospitals and colleges of agriculture and commerce, while our native troops are already the pride of our army in Morocco."

But to return to the Jota, after this long digression. In the summer of 1909 things were going very badly indeed, and the Government, true to the time-honoured Spanish rule of directing a distant war from the arm-chairs of Ministerial offices in Madrid, ordered the General in command to make a frontal attack on the Gurugú, the peak which towers over Melilla. This was intended partly to dislodge, once for all, the hornet's nest of sharpshooters who were worrying the Spanish garrison, but mainly to silence by a brilliant victory the growing murmurs of the nation against a campaign which popular orators declared to have been begun in the interest of a few wealthy capitalists owning valuable mines in the immediate neighbourhood of Melilla.

The General, Marina, a good officer and able strategist, protested in vain. The orders were explicit. Public opinion was dangerously excited, and a brilliant and decisive action had to be fought at once. The attack was accordingly attempted, with the result that one of the infantry regiments was caught in an ambush, and a whole battalion of the Cazadores de las Navas was practically wiped out. Considerably over a thousand officers and men of that and other regiments fell in the Wolf's Gorge of the Gurugú, and so complete was the defeat that for three months the bodies of those martyrs to duty and a preposterous governmental system could not be recovered.

On the night of the catastrophe the Colonel of the Cazadores went to offer what cheer he could to the few survivors of his ill-fated regiment. Heartbroken himself, he found no words to say to the heart-broken men who hardly had spirit enough to stand up and salute him—half their comrades dead, their soldierly pride humbled, their demoralisation seemingly beyond repair. But as he stood among them, silent and grief-stricken as themselves, he saw that one of the men, hardly conscious what he was doing, had picked up his guitar and was lightly touching the strings. It must here be explained that although the Cazadores de las Navas is a Catalan regiment, it is mostly recruited in Aragón.

"A gleam of hope entered my heart," said the Colonel, when many days after he related what had taken place. "If only he would play loud enough to be heard he would save us; I know what their music means to the men of Aragón. I dared not speak, I was so afraid of putting him off, for if he had known I was there he would have dropped the guitar to stand at attention. But he went on, a little louder and a little louder, and another man took up the air, and then another, until at last all the regiment—all that was left of it—followed suit, and all began singing—

"'*La Virgen del Pilár dice*
Que no quiere moros ni moras,
Que quiere ser capitana
De la tropa aragonesa.'[1]

"Very softly they sang at first, as if it were a dirge for their dead friends, but when they came to the chorus their voices rang out as bravely and gaily as if all were well with us—

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[1] The Virgin of the Pillar says
That she does not like Moors,
That she will be the captain
Of the Aragonese soldiers."

"'*À la jota, jota,*
Que viva Aragón,
Y la Pilaríca
De mi corazón.'

"Then," said the Colonel, "I quietly slipped away. They no longer needed consolation from me, for they remembered that, whatever they had lost, they still had the Pilarica, the beloved of all hearts."

When the Gurugú was finally taken, an English newspaper correspondent commented on the extraordinary lightness of heart and irresponsible gaiety of these Spanish soldiers, saying that he had actually seen one of them carrying a guitar under his arm as he scrambled up the precipitous slopes that had been the scene of disaster three months earlier. The newspaper man jumped too hastily to his conclusion, for which, however, he may be forgiven, for he could hardly know what the Jota, played on the guitar, may mean to the men of Aragón.

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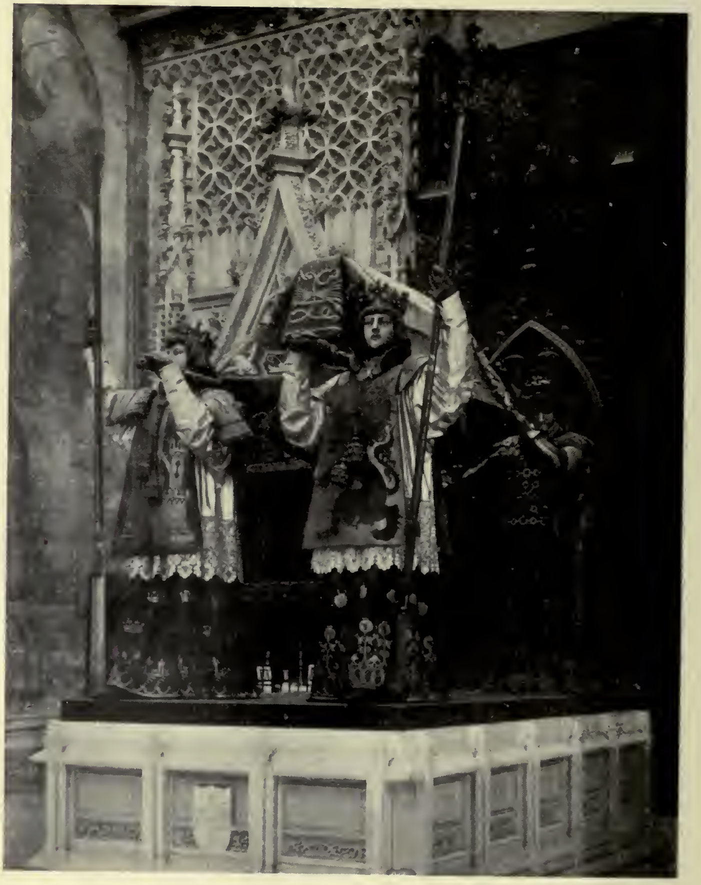

THE COLUMBUS MONUMENT.

CHAPTER XVIII

Holy Week in Seville—What not to see—The Blessing of the Palms — Cathedral dignitaries — The Cardinal and the children—The Dean's smile—The Cathedral steps—The Entry into Jerusalem—Light in dark places—Mozarabic ritual—The Display of the Banner—Our Lady of the Old Time—Mozarabic art—The Banner of the *Menestrales*—A portrait of San Fernando—The Roman eagles—The Entombment—The silver shrine and its golden key—Wheeled traffic forbidden—Brotherhoods, rich and poor.

I SUPPOSE *My Spanish Year* would be incomplete without a chapter about the Holy Week ceremonies and the Seville Fair; but so much has already been written on these subjects from the tourist's point of view that, if I am to say anything about them, I must try to describe some characteristic features which are apt to pass more or less unnoticed.

Every one knows that during Holy Week numerous Brotherhoods and Guilds pervade the streets of Seville and other Andalucian towns in procession, the original intention of which was to show images representing events in the Passion of Our Lord, in order to bring home to the illiterate people the tragedy of the Crucifixion. And every one who sees these processions in Seville remarks on the artistic merit of many of the images, the magnificent dresses, and the picturesque effects produced in the streets and in the Cathedral by the innumerable candles flickering round the platforms on which the images are borne.

These are the common-places of Holy Week in Seville. They catch the eye of every visitor who has the slightest knowledge of or feeling for art; but long before the week is out, those who come merely to see something new are sick to death of the eternal repetition of the same thing — the "Brothers" or the "Nazarenes" in their voluminous robes and tall peaked hoods, the brass bands, the Civil Guard, the first *paso* draped with velvet or satin, and surrounded with silver candelabra and vases of flowers, with an image of Our Lord in the centre; more Brothers or Nazarenes, more music, more Civil Guards, and then the *paso* of Our Lady, which closes every procession save some which were instituted before the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin became a dogma of the Roman Church.

When one has seen between twenty and thirty of the *pasos*, all creeping along at a snail's pace, with a pause every few yards for the bearers to rest and the people to admire, one does begin to get a thought weary of certain features in them. But we who know Seville have learnt what to see and what to avoid, and we are careful not to exhaust ourselves physically and mentally by attempting to watch the slow progress of a dozen *pasos* past the same point on the same day, for indeed the processions are but one feature in the manifold ceremonies of Holy Week, and if you set about it the right way you may vary your emotions almost every hour of the day.

Therefore I, who have often felt sorry to see my compatriots enduring the maximum of fatigue to see the minimum of what is most interesting in these curious survivals of the early Church, will try to indicate a few incidents in the long programme of ecclesiastical ceremonies which do not figure in the official account of what are incongruously described as *las fiestas de Semana santa.*

The Blessing of the Palms on Palm Sunday is one of the most beautiful of all the Cathedral ceremonies. I go early—not later than 8 a.m., and as much earlier as I find convenient, and when the early Mass is over I go across to the Columbus monument in front of the south door, and there get a perfect view of the procession on its stately march down the long aisle to the door of San Miguel. First goes the bearer of the Cathedral cross, its brass gleaming above the curious round frame here used to drape the parish crosses with the ritual colour for the day. Then follow the minor clergy in black soutanes and stiffly starched rochets with flowing sleeves; the censer-bearers in beautiful dalmatics of old brocade, swinging chased silver censers worthy of a place in a museum; the choir boys in scarlet soutanes and white rochets; the beneficed clergy—recently granted, as a special favour to the Cardinalate of Seville, permission to wear red silk linings to their black silk cloaks (*capa corál*); the portly canons in purple silk, the officiant and his servers in magnificent embroidered vestments centuries old, and then, supported by the Dean and the Arch-priest of the diocese, the Cardinal-Archbishop.

He is already very stout although hardly past middle life, but his unwieldy figure is counterbalanced by a strong face with a powerful jaw and friendly humorous grey eyes, and he looks magnificent in his white fur hood and robe of scarlet silk, with a train four yards long, borne behind him by two of the Seises, whose history has already been related. He has only been here four years, and came after a long interregnum due to two sudden deaths in the episcopate, but the way in which he has stirred up the diocese is surprising. The Cathedral music, from being the worst, now ranks among the best in Spain, the services begin punctually instead of at any hour that happened to be convenient, and above all, he has put a stop to the illicit sale by parish priests, monks, and nuns of objects of artistic value belonging to their churches. Formerly a brisk trade was carried on in such, but our energetic Cardinal has had every picture, carving, and church ornament in his diocose inventoried, and now not so much as a painted tile can be touched without a licence from the palace.

Yet he is a kindly man, this vigorous prelate. I once followed in his train at a charitable affair in which I had the privilege of presenting to him some twenty small children of the working class whom I had put into fancy dress, to their and my own great enjoyment. And for every child the Cardinal, as he gave them his ring to kiss, had a smile and a kind and a witty remark on their costume or the historical character it represented; so that all the little faces beamed behind him as he made his progress round the hall where they stood to attention. Kissing episcopal rings is hardly in my line, but Cardinal Almaraz's kindness to the children always makes me remember my share in that ceremony with pleasure.

Next in gorgeousness of vestment to the Cardinal comes the Dean, a most courteous gentleman not much over forty, and blessed, like his Bishop, with a strong sense of humour. On one memorable Palm Sunday, as the procession passed the Columbus monument, the Dean caught sight of me standing there with a tall English girl, whose broken Castilian he had been helping out at a dinner party at our house a few weeks before, and his eyes began to twinkle and his fingers instinctively went up to give us an Andalucian salute. He recovered his gravity in an instant, and with great presence of mind converted his salute into a motion which the public would take for a blessing. But the deed had been done. When next we met outside the Cathedral we thanked him for his "blessing," and now he can never look at us in the crowd during a procession without a twinkle in his eyes and a visible compression of his lips, lest he should indecorously smile at us again.

The attitude of a Spanish congregation during the Mass is remarkably reverent compared with the behaviour in many foreign Cathedrals: one really finds here an atmosphere of sincere devotion. But the processions are regarded from a different standpoint. The dignitaries there are in the midst of the crowd, and the crowd, although perfectly respectful, does its best to win a sign of recognition from its friends and acquaintances in the long lines of clergy, choir-men, and *monocillos* (little monkeys), as the singing-boys are familiarly called.

The door of San Miguel—opposite to the College, or cloister of that name, in which dwelt all the Mozarabic priests who still survived when San Fernando entered Seville—is thrown wide open as the procession approaches, and a wonderful shimmering effect of light and shade is produced when the waving palms borne by the clergy move out from the dimness of the Cathedral into the blazing sunshine of the street. But I never follow the palms; one only gets lost in the crowd, and misses all the best of the picture. As soon as the last gleam of the Cardinal's scarlet disappears through the door, I turn round and go to meet the procession on its way back.

One has time to go out by the door of the Bells (*campanillas*), where formerly bells were rung to call loiterers to Mass, and walk round to that of los Palos—so-called because it once opened on to a grove of trees (poles, *palos*, now long cut down)—getting a good view of the procession as it comes round outside the Orange Court on the broad terrace raised by six steps above the level of the road. This terrace is a relic of the half-century during which the ancient Visigothic Cathedral was converted to Moslem uses. Every Mozarabic church that was used as a mosque has a raised terrace on one or more sides, like that of the mosque of Cordova. It was originally intended to accommodate the overflowing congregations during Ramadan, but after the reconquest the Christians allowed it to degenerate into a meeting-place for merchants to transact business, like the money-changers in the Temple, until the scandal became too great, and the Casa Lonja (now containing the archives of the Indies) was built in the seventeenth century. The terrace forms a fine vantage-ground for those who want to see the Holy Week processions, the recent widening of the Calle Canovas del Castillo giving an uninterrupted view from the door of San Miguel, where they enter the Cathedral, right away to the Town Hall.

Just as the Palm Sunday procession reaches the door of the Palos it is closed, and the whole procession comes to a stop, while the Master of the Cathedral Ceremonies raps on it three times. This, with the palms and olive branches strewed before the Cardinal, represents the entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem. A verse is intoned and then in the midst of a dead silence the doors slowly open, and the many-coloured procession with its waving palms fades into the twilight within, while women and children try to secure an olive twig, for they, like the palms, are blessed. A palm branch hung on the balcony protects the house from lightning, and the olive branch brings peace and contentment if carried home and placed before your "Saints."

Palm Sunday evening is devoted to the first of the street processions. These are late ones, reaching the stands of reserved seats in front of the Town Hall when night is falling. It is wise to get one's first impressions from the Sunday evening *pasos* after their candles are lighted, so that the images of the Passion and of Our Lady convey the beautiful symbolical idea of carrying with them light into dark places. Formerly all the street lamps were extinguished on the line of march, so that the way of the people was literally lighted by their "Saints"; but that was a long time ago, and now we can only imagine how impressive the old custom was, from the glow that floods the street of Sierpes before the procession itself comes into sight.

It is impossible to compress into a single chapter all the interesting and beautiful ceremonies of Holy Week in this Cathedral, apart from their historic aspect. Seville does not retain the actual Mozarabic or Visigothic ritual in any of her chapels, as does Toledo, for when San Fernando got here the Popes for over a century and a half had been trying to suppress the rite of the Church, which from force of circumstances had been so long cut off from and almost independent of Rome, and therefore the rite was not retained after the reconquest. But it is clear that the sainted king permitted the faithful Mozarabic priests of the College of San Miguel to take a leading part in the offices of the transformed mosque when it once more became the Cathedral of Seville, for the Oriental survivals we see to-day could never have been introduced in the middle of the thirteenth century by priests and bishops from Castile.

Many such survivals are mere details, more interesting to ecclesiastical archæologists than to laymen. But others are so striking that no visitor of intelligence should miss them.

One of these is the so-called "Rending of the White Veil" after the nine o'clock Mass on the Wednesday of Holy Week. This is represented by drawing apart immense curtains of beautiful old white *tafetán*, a fine soft silk of the kind worn by Moslem princes when Seville was celebrated for her manufacture of velvets, brocades, and satins, all of which were lined with this filmy *tafetán*. No one knows exactly why the White Veil is rent on this day, though I am told that it is another heritage from the Mozarabs. It is torn from the rod on which it hangs, so that when divided one curtain falls in a heap on either side of the altar, whence they are drawn into the sacristy by the Seises.

At 3.30 on Tuesday in Holy Week we have what is known as the Display of the Banner, another ceremony foreign to the ritual of Rome. Two priests kneel on the altar steps, while a third waves over them a voluminous banner of the same soft gauzy *tafetán* as the White Veil. The banner is of a dark green, so dark as to appear black in the dim Cathedral, where all the painted windows are shrouded with black curtains during this season of penitence. Formerly the two priests used to prostrate themselves; now they only kneel. No one can explain the ceremony, which takes place four times in all, from the eve of Passion Sunday to Holy Tuesday, but it is supposed to have some connection with the Mozarabic *Virgén de la Antigua*, a twelfth-century fresco in the chapel of that name, whose history is worth relating.

When the Almohade Moors took Seville and appropriated the old Gothic Cathedral for their new mosque, this mural painting of Our Lady was left in its place. Alfonso x. in his *Cántigas de la Virgen Maria* (Hymns of the Virgin) says that more than once the fanatic Almohades wished to destroy the image, but such a glory shone from it as to dazzle their eyes and they retreated, afraid to touch it. The truth probably was that the Almohade ruler, who was dependent on Sevillian artists for his alterations and additions to his mosque and his Alcazar,[1] did not venture to risk a revolt among his Mozarab subjects, for the Christian community was always more numerous here than anywhere else in Moslem Spain. Therefore, although he appropriated or perhaps bought the old Cathedral, as Abderrahman I. had done with that of St. Vincent in Cordova, he left this venerated image and its chapel to the Christians, who made an entrance to it from the street and closed the former door, which otherwise would communicate with the mosque.

It is related in the same *Cántigas* that when San Fernando was besieging Seville, he was miraculously admitted one night through the Jerez gate—the nearest to the Cathedral—into the Chapel of N'ra Señora de la Antigua (Our Lady of the Old Time), and being discovered there by the Moors he hardly escaped with his life. Tradition suggests that Our Lady of the Old Time was walled up after this by the Moslems, probably from indignation at what must have seemed to them treachery on the part of the Mozarabs within the walls, for they alone could have admitted the Christian king into their own chapel. The city surrendered not many weeks later, and there is at present nothing to show when the picture was uncovered. But reference is made to it from the thirteenth century onwards, and my own impression is that the chapel was reopened immediately, for there had certainly not been time to forget its situation, as happened elsewhere in the case of images buried to save them from desecration.

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[1] Seville under Islam was always noted for its fine buildings.

In the sixteenth century the fresco was removed from the wall on which it was painted to the altar of the present chapel, which had been built to receive it. It was at that time unfortunately "restored," "renovated," and "beautified" as well as removed, as a contemporary account tells us, and much of its mediæval character was thus lost. But the Child still has the characteristic round bullet head with stiff black curls, which is seen in all the Mozarab work in this region, and is in every case so curiously inferior in technique to that of the Mother that one can only accept it as a type, venerated and copied from one generation to another from primitive times. The Virgin, on the other hand, as in all the work of the twelfth century, is beautiful in technique as well as in feature, and her strange drapery with its stiff diagonal folds is singularly reminiscent of the drapery of some of the Egypto-Tartessian figures found in the Cerro de los Santos several years ago, and now in the Archæological Museum at Madrid.

Long and bitter have been the quarrels of local art critics over the period and origin of this fresco, but once the history of the Christians of Seville under Islam has been made clear, all combines to show that Our Lady of the Old Time was here when San Fernando came, and that the image was worshipped by the Mozarabs throughout the Almohade occupation. And in the light of present knowledge it seems highly probable that the Display of the Banner is a reminiscence of some act of humiliation imposed on the faithful priests who, even after their last Bishop fled in 1239, still lived in the Cloister of San Miguel and continued to exercise the rites of their religion. The Moors may perhaps have made the ceremony a condition of the retention by the Christians of their chapel within the precincts of the mosque; and it is by no means impossible that something conclusive on the subject may come to light one day, when the mass of unexamined documents in the Cathedral archives are at length sorted and read.

Though so little is known about it as yet, the interest of this curious Display of the Banner is seen to be great when one realises that it is a direct link with the Moslem dominion in Seville, taking us back six centuries to the time when the splendid ritual which now delights the eyes and ears of thousands was represented in this ancient basilica by a few poor priests who said Mass in the Chapel of *La Antigua*, perhaps at the risk of their lives.

Most of the remaining ceremonies of Holy Week are the same as in Rome and elsewhere, save in minor details which need not be described here. But the processions in the streets date from the thirteenth century, and we can hardly doubt that they too have survived from the early Christian Church.

San Fernando himself gave a banner with his portrait embroidered on it to the Brotherhood of the *Menestrales* (Mechanics: the Guild was of working tailors); and that too must have existed before the reconquest, for the King died only four years later, and we are not told that he founded the Brotherhood in the interval. Indeed, if he had done so it would have been very carefully recorded in their annals, as was his gift of the banner. They, as the oldest of the Brotherhoods and favoured by the King, were given the privilege of watching beside his coffin when he died, and they maintained their right to this place of honour on the anniversary of his death until their Guild dissolved for lack of funds not many years since. Another and richer Guild tried to oust them two or three centuries ago, but the *Menestrales* went to law and won their case. The banner given by San Fernando now hangs in a glass case in the church of St. Isidore. Very little is left of the portrait, and what little there is was hidden in the sixteenth century by an embroidered head of Charles v. which was sewn over it. This was removed for examination a few years ago, and the thirteenth-century portrait was found beneath. Although, like the banner of San Fernando in the Town Hall, it has been so much repaired and restored that very little of the original remains, enough can be seen to convince any expert in embroidery that it is Mozarabic work of the period in question.

The strongest evidence of the early origin of the Brotherhoods lies in the fact that the Roman eagles and a standard with S.P.Q.R. are borne in advance of every *paso*, while "Roman soldiers" ride after some few of them. These cannot have been "put on the stage" in the thirteenth century, for illuminated MSS. of that period, including the exceedingly valuable contemporary works of Alfonso x., all depict sacred characters in the costumes of the day. Nor were they introduced in the fourteenth century, for there is a missal of that date in which the Roman soldiers at the Crucifixion wear the dress of the fighting-men of Alfonso xi., and one of the men casting lots for the coat of Our Lord is dressed in parti-coloured hose with cap and bells, like a court jester.

The consecration of the Holy Oils, the great procession with the Host to the "Monument" erected at the west end of the Cathedral (over the tomb of the Columbus family), the washing of the feet of twelve poor men by the Cardinal-Archbishop in the Cathedral, the dinner given to them in the Archbishop's palace, the Miserere on the night of Holy Thursday, the Adoration of the Cross, when the clergy and the Dean and Chapter walk barefoot round the nave, the consecration of the Paschal candle, which weighs about 70 lb., and the Rending of the Black Veil, when the Host is returned to the high altar—all these things are described in the programmes hawked about the streets, and only one of them calls for notice here.

This is the ceremony of Holy Thursday, when the Host is taken to the "Monument," symbolising the burial of Our Lord. In silence the pyx is removed, its shrine is left open, and the cloth is dishevelled in careless folds across the altar, to show that the sacred elements are gone from it. The procession, all clad in funeral vestments, moves slowly and silently down the nave to the west end, where the sixteenth-century "Monument" towers almost to the roof, its white and gold columns supporting life-sized saints and angels, while beneath its tall dome gleams the great silver *Custodia* in which the Host is to lie until the day of Resurrection. This shrine, which is ten feet high, is one of the master-pieces of that master of Spanish silversmiths, Juan de Arphe, and the idea of its representing the tomb of Christ is one more among many anomalies. The golden pyx is placed in the *Custodia*, the doors are closed and locked with a golden key, and the key is handed to the Civil Governor, who hangs it on a gold chain round his neck. It will remain in his keeping until Easter Eve, because, so we are told, the body of Christ was laid in unconsecrated ground after the Crucifixion; and therefore, while the Host is within the tomb, the Chapter transfers the care of it to the lay authority.

During Holy Thursday and Good Friday the lights on the "Monument" are kept burning day and night. Then on the Saturday morning the gold key is returned to the priests, the *Custodia* is opened, and the Host is taken out and carried in procession back to the altar. And the moment the pyx is replaced in the shrine the organ peals out, all the bells are rung, and guns are fired.

It will be noticed that the Church in Seville anticipates both the Crucifixion and the Resurrection by a day, celebrating the former on Thursday and the latter on Saturday. The Sevillian divines profess to explain this, but I am bound to say I could never understand their explanation, which connects it in some way with the mystery of the Eucharist. The people have their own account of the matter. They say that "in old times" the fast was kept from Wednesday until Easter morning, during which days no wheeled traffic was permitted in the streets, the shops were closed, and all business was suspended. After a time the four days' fast was found so inconvenient that it was reduced to three, and in order to make this possible it was arranged that the Resurrection should be celebrated on Easter Eve instead of on Easter Day! Many people implicitly believe this, and the explanation was given to me in such good faith that I actually accepted it at first, although it seemed a strange way out of the difficulty. Wheeled traffic is still forbidden in the streets on Holy Thursday and Good Friday even in "modern" Seville, and in other places in Andalucia not so much as a donkey can be hired at any price on Good Friday.

"I should be *mal mirado*" (sent to Coventry), said a village *arriero* to me one Good Friday, "if I took money for my beast on the day Our Lord died. On that day rich and poor alike must walk in penitence, no matter how tired they may become."

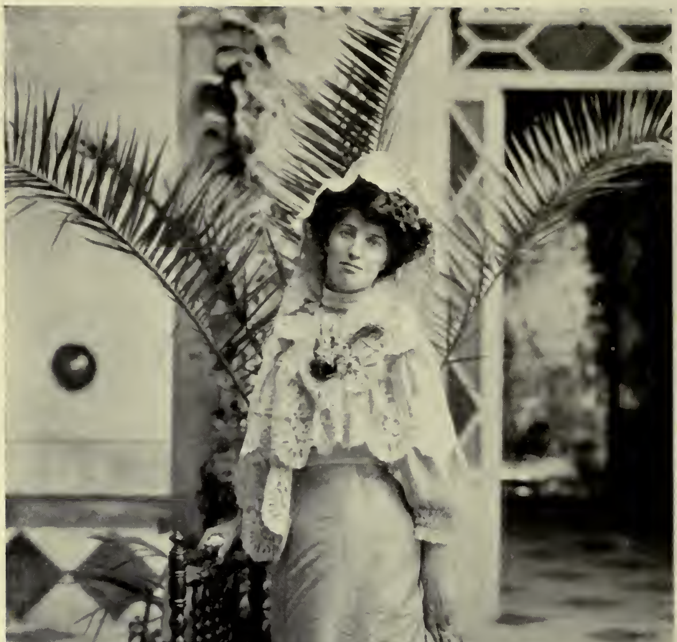
In Seville people do not trouble so much about being *mal mirado* on ecclesiastical grounds, and strenuous efforts were made one year by the Radical party to induce the authorities to withdraw the prohibition of driving, even at the cost of altering the route of the processions. But such an outcry was raised by the public at the proposal that it had to be dropped; for Seville business people know very well that any interference with the processions would injure trade by diminishing the influx of tourists, who flock here every year for Holy Week, far more than is done by closing the central streets to cabs and tram-cars during the two days.

Indeed, the slightest change in the time-honoured regulations stirs up sentiments which are anything but pious, as I have already shown in regard to the Corpus Christi festival.

For years past there has been a latent enmity between a wealthy Brotherhood, whose name it is kinder to suppress, and a very poor one. The hours of their respective appearance at the "Stations" (as the route taken is called, because in former days the progress of the processions represented the Stations of the Cross) are fixed by the Dean and Chapter, for if two processions meet at any "Station," hopeless confusion results; and the two Brotherhoods in question have long been liable to meet if the first is unpunctual. Two years ago the rich Brotherhood arrived an hour late at one of the "Stations," and were met by the poor one from the other side of the town. The poor Brothers were in the right of it, for this was the hour at which their *paso* was due to cross that street, but the others were determined to take precedence, as they would naturally have done had they started at the proper time. These particular Brothers are largely of the aristocracy, and expect to be obeyed without question by their inferiors in worldly position. Their leader autocratically commanded the poor men to stand back and make room for him and his followers to pass. But the poor men refused, as they had every right to do in the circumstances, whereupon the aristocrat, regardless of his gorgeous velvet mantle and satin hood, forgot all the penitence and humility he was supposed to be feeling, and attacked the other man with his fists.

What might have happened had the leader of the poor procession hit back, no one can say; but the belligerent "noble" was quickly brought to his bearings, for the "Elder Brother" of the poor Guild with presence of mind laid their great processional cross on the ground before the feet of the would-be fighters. No Sevillian, however angry, would dream of desecrating the cross, so the irate aristocrat had to retire, while the other procession passed on. Pride, I fear, swelled the hearts of the Brothers under the homely calico habits, bought out of their poor wages at the cost of long thrift and self-denial, which thus for once took precedence of their wealthy rivals.

Personally I find the poor Brotherhoods far more interesting than the rich, for they all have history behind them, and sometimes modest *pasos* whose Brothers are dressed in cheap calico, are draped with ancient damask and brocade more valuable and far more beautiful than the stiff new gold-embroidered mantles with which the modern Brotherhoods deck their "Virgins," regardless of cost. Some day I shall write a book about the stories of the *pasos*, grave and gay, but I must not begin upon them here, for I have already dwelt too long perhaps on these aspects of Holy Week in Seville.



DRESSED FOR THE FAIR.

CHAPTER XIX

The April Fair—From the harem to the *caseta*—The Prado of San Sebastian—The Inquisition—Conscripts and the Flag—Spanish football clubs—Buying votes—The cattle at the Fair—Harnessed *à la* Jerez—The Sevillian *élégante*: fourteen dresses for three days—The afternoon drive—Dancing at night—The marriage market—Mantillas, *velos*, and Paris hats—Midnight in the Fair—The curtained *casetas* of the clubs—Manila shawls—The Queen and the mantilla—"John-a-Dreams" and the national dress—Three engagements and a marriage—The year ends in Paradise.

The true history of the April Fair at Seville, like so much else in Spain, is lost in the mists of ages; but old prints and pictures combine with tradition to show that it was at first merely a cattle fair, where dealers coming from a distance set up tents in which to sleep and transact business, attended by the itinerant gipsies who flock to fairs of every kind in every country. Gradually the tents of the dealers became a meeting-place for their families and their friends from the town, and then refreshments had to be provided, and amusements such as music, dancing, and singing soon followed. Now the Seville Fair on the Prado de San Sebastian almost suggests, in some respects, a show at Earl's Court or Olympia, with the important difference that it is a living reality, not a scenic representation for which one takes a ticket at the gate.

The most curious feature about this three days' riot of festivity is its extraordinary contrast to the daily life of Spain. I have already referred to the seclusion of women, the extreme privacy of domestic life, typified by the lace curtains which shroud every window on the street and are never drawn aside, the darkness of the rooms thus guarded from the intrusion alike of the sun and of the stranger's eye, the strict surveillance exercised over young girls not only in the street but in their own homes—in short, the persistence of the Oriental tradition that the women belong to their men, not to themselves, and that no stranger has a right to look at and admire them.

This is the mode of life imposed on the women throughout the whole year. But when April comes and the Fair begins, all these restrictions are thrown to the winds, the mothers escort their daughters to the Prado, and there, seated in the "reception-room" of a *caseta* or booth, with its wooden floor raised three feet above the ground to give a better view, they look on while their girls dance in full view of the public, hour after hour and night after night, for all the world as if they were professionals at a theatre. The whole thing is an anomaly without explanation, unless indeed one takes it as an unconscious protest of the Sevillian women against their lifelong imprisonment in a home which in respect of its seclusion is not very different from a harem.

The visible result, however, is quite charming. There are whole streets of canvas booths, large and small, luxurious and the reverse, simple, artistic, and fantastic; handsome buildings of brick and iron set up by the fashionable clubs; ephemeral representations of favourite *corrales* and *ventas*, beloved of artists, who paint their typical *casetas* with their own hands; there are acres of canvas covering hundreds of toy and sweetmeat stalls, drinking stalls, Aunt Sallies or their Spanish equivalents, and, above all, stalls for the sale of the ever-popular *buñolitos* described in an earlier chapter. The *casetas*—a name given without distinction to every erection in the Fair—make in all directions boundary-lines between the carriage ways and the ground occupied by the cattle, of which there are thousands upon thousands, crowded together over the great plain, herd by herd, without any sort of partition between them, donkeys cheek by jowl with pigs, sheep rubbing shoulders with mules, all peacefully lying or standing in their appointed places.

Here San Fernando encamped for a time when he was besieging Seville, and here later on stood the *Quemadero*, the burning-place of the Inquisition. Now, except during the great fair in April and the lesser one at Michaelmas, the Prado is the exercise-ground for the troops of the garrison. Here the annual batches of new recruits are drilled, and here takes place the interesting ceremony of the *Jura de la Bandera*, when thousands of conscripts, all kneeling together, swear fealty to their God, their Flag, and their King. Here, too, the football clubs, of which there are several, play on Sundays all the year round, even in the heat of summer. I don't think many Englishmen would care to watch, far less to play, football with the thermometer at 100 in the shade ; yet the "*Sevilla Balompié*" plays right through the summer, beginning their matches at 6 a.m. when the afternoons get too hot for running. And the more praise is due to these energetic lads because they get no support either in money or approval from those in a higher social position. What their financial difficulties are I learnt last summer from an English clerk who umpires for one of the clubs. He told me that now the weather was getting so hot they wanted to start cricket instead of football, but they had no money to buy the cricket things and knew no one who would help them to raise funds! And yet at election times, whether parliamentary or municipal, there is always plenty of money to buy votes, and one of these same footballers told me that he had been offered up to fifteen pesetas during a hotly contested election to go and personate a voter who was safe in his decent grave! It has never yet occurred to candidates that a subscription to football clubs and the like would be a more respectable form of bribery than offering money to a half-back.

But during the Fair nobody pays any attention to football, politics, or anything else of a serious nature. We are out to enjoy ourselves, and we do it.

A drive through the actual cattle fair surprises those who think that Spaniards are cruel to animals. Sheep, goats, pigs, donkeys, mules, horses, cattle, are all herded together, quite tame and happy, most of them loose and kept from wandering only by the voice of the herdsman and the bark of his dog; troops of young horses and young mules are enclosed only by an impromptu rail consisting of a rope tied to iron stakes driven into the ground; great long-horned oxen and bulls lie on the ground without any sort of tether or fence. The only animals really shut in are the well-bred riding and carriage horses, which occupy wooden stables on the farther side of the *Reál de la Feria.* This is the street where are the fashionable *casetas*, where the fireworks are let off at night, and where horsemen and women display their skill in a game which may be called threading the maze, among the countless motors and carriages of all sorts and kinds, private and hired, most of which contain daughters in white mantillas and mothers in black, all intent on seeing and being seen by the crowd.

Many of the horses in this medley of conveyances are harnessed *à la Jerezana*—a heavy collar and saddle, and rope traces covered with leather where they touch the horses, with many tinkling bells and innumerable balls and tassels of gay-coloured wool tied on wherever possible, and especially to the headpiece. I do not know why this harness is called "Jerez fashion," for I have seen far more animals thus decorated in the Sierra than I ever saw at Jerez. But even the most persistent seeker after information is fain to put aside his notebook here, and merely enjoy the picturesqueness and old-world air of these family coaches with their Goya-like occupants, and the life, colour, and animation of the whole scene. For in spite of the exhilaration produced by the pure fresh April air with its brilliant sunshine, and the universal atmosphere of enjoyment, one never quite loses the feeling that it is a play, even though oneself be one of the players, and that all too soon the curtain will ring down on one of the prettiest scenes to be found in Spain if not in Europe.

I have been told that the really smart young lady has fourteen new dresses every year for the Fair. How she contrives to wear them all I don't know, unless she puts one on over the other, for she can only change her frock three times a day, because all the rest of the day and night she is *en evidence.* In the morning she puts on the latest hat from Paris to drive round and look at the cattle, hiding her almond eyes and her pretty arched eyebrows with some horrible "creation" utterly unsuited to her style. Few Spanish women can put on a hat—very likely from want of practice, for it is only in the last twenty years or so that the mantilla or *velo* has ceased to be the universal wear.

When our *élégante* shows herself in the afternoon in her second new dress, with her hair done very high, a mass of carnations resting against it and the immense comb of pierced tortoiseshell which she has inherited from her great-grandmother, and with the soft folds of a white silk mantilla floating about her face as she drives (or motors—dreadful anachronism !) up and down the Reál, we hardly know her for the same girl who looked so dull and heavy under that Paris monstrosity this morning. Her eyes flash, her white teeth gleam, and one begins to understand what poets mean when they talk about the sparkling brilliance of an Andalucian beauty.

By this time the *casetas* are full of dancers, mostly schoolgirls and children as yet, for coquettes of sixteen and upwards are well aware that they will show to more advantage after nightfall, in the brilliant artificial light. The older girls, unless they own carriages or have the entrée to the fashionable clubs, stroll up and down with their friends of both sexes, criticising the "carriage folk" and thinking no doubt how much better they themselves would grace those expensively appointed vehicles. At six o'clock, when the bull-fight ends and the spectators come to the Prado, the already crowded drive, nearly a mile long with carriages four deep, becomes so congested that nothing can move beyond a foot's pace, and nervous pedestrians can only cross the Reál and the intersecting roads at the entrance to the Fair by a sort of diminutive Eiffel Tower erection which was built some fifteen years ago for this particular purpose.

At night the Eiffel Tower, or *Pasadera*, as it is called, is illuminated from top to bottom, the whole of the Reál is arched over with garlands of coloured electric bulbs, and every *caseta* vies with its neighbours in the lighting of the reception-rooms in which the girls, in their third new frocks, are to dance. For the display of youth and beauty is the main object of the social side of the Fair, which is in point of fact the marriage market of Seville. It is said that more young people come to an understanding during these three days than in all the rest of the year, and it is easy to believe it, for we know that all the world over spring is the prettiest ring-time, and the young man's fancy in particular lightly turns to thoughts of love at that season here in Seville.

Dancing goes on from nine o'clock till two or three in the morning. Whether it be good or bad, the sight of waving arms and bending heads in *seguidillas* and *peteneras* never fails to attract the passers-by. Often as many as a couple of hundred people will collect in front of a fashionable *caseta* where half a dozen Señoritas are dancing together, although only the first row of the crowd, pressed against the steps leading up from the footpath, can see anything beyond faces draped in white lace or black *madroños*, and white hands waving be-ribboned castanets.

The greater the crowd in front, the better the dancers are pleased; indeed, I remember some girls telling me one year that they had had a tremendous success over-night, "for there were so many people watching them that some of the invited guests had tried to get through to the *caseta* no less than three times in vain." And these are the girls who would lose their reputations if they were seen in the street alone in the daytime, or even two sisters together, without a chaperone! Mysterious indeed are the social customs of Spain!

I have already written of fireworks. If these are good even in villages, it may be supposed that they are considerably better in wealthy Seville. The only wonder is that the whole street of the Reál is not set alight every night of the Fair, for the fireworks always end with the dangerous *traca*, a chain of crackers laid from tree to tree the whole length of the canvas street, and the crackers seem to explode actually into the *casetas*. And alongside of the footpath is a double or treble row of carriages, whose horses seem to be merely bored with the squibs and other noisy and fiery arrangements which explode under their noses. It is sheer good luck that no terrible accident has yet occurred. But no one protests, although every year people mildly remark that it is horribly dangerous and very disagreeable to have sparks falling all over the footpaths. In the matter of fireworks Andalucian *laissez faire* is peculiarly apparent.

At midnight the fun of the Fair is in full swing. Merry-go-rounds are numerous and highly popular, and each one has its steam organ or mechanical piano grinding out popular airs long since done to death in the streets. There is one in particular, called "Serafina," which for years has had a vogue equal to that of "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" in England when we were young, and it is just as fatuous a tune with even more fatuous words, if that be possible. This nightmare pursues us all along the street of the gipsies, and that of the toy stalls, and that of the bourgeois *casetas* to the right of the Reál. The only place where it is not heard is at the top of the Reál, where are the *casetas* of two of the principal clubs. Here all the curtains are carefully closed lest any profane eye should see the glories within, and military bands play valses and *rigodones*—a quite peculiarly dull form of quadrille—for the amusement of the *alta aristocracia.*

Why these clubs should go to the trouble of receiving guests behind drawn curtains in the Prado instead of in their handsome club-houses in the town does not appear. There certainly is nothing in these entertainments of the traditional spirit of the Fair, the essence of which is that all the amusement should go on in full view of the public. One of their morning receptions is, however, quite delightful. This is the children's ball, which begins at 10 a.m. and ends before lunch. It is attended by a crowd of fascinating babies in fancy dress, all Spanish—the boys as *toreros*, *majos* (the Andalucian "nut" of a bygone day), bandits, and what not, the girls in miniature mantillas, Manila shawls, or gipsy dress, and their innocent vanity makes the Reál charming when they drive up and down after the party in their mothers' carriages, pretending to be quite grown up.

A Manila shawl is the gala dress of every working woman who can manage to buy or hire one for the Fair. In some cases they are heirlooms, handed down from mother to daughter. Just as the mantilla is the survival of the Moslem veil among the well-to-do, so this shawl, like the black one worn every day, is the survival of the veil among the poor. As late as the seventeenth century, Spanish women still covered their faces; indeed, in the Provinces of Cadiz, Malaga, and Granada there are even now villages where the women leave only one eye exposed when they go out, especially to Mass. Decrees were issued by more than one king, forbidding this "pagan" veiling of the female face, on the ground that it tended to immorality by rendering the charms thus concealed irresistible to the opposite sex. The ladies retaliated by refusing to come out of their houses at all if they were compelled to expose themselves in that "indecent" fashion (I quote from contemporary writers); but at last a compromise was arrived at. They still covered their faces when they appeared in the street, but it was with transparent embroidery and lace, thus observing the letter of the law but most effectually violating the spirit. We owe a certain debt of gratitude to those ladies, whose strong sense of propriety gave birth to the mantilla, the prettiest head-dress ever invented by woman.

When we first came to Spain in 1902 fashionable ladies were doing their best to suppress the mantilla, on the ground that it was ridiculous to keep up a "national costume" in Spain when all civilised countries had adopted Paris fashions; and at one time it really seemed as if it would soon cease to be worn by any woman who had money enough to buy a hat. Fortunately, however, these women were in a minority, for here hats are only bought by the rich, and are very expensive. The simpler form of lace head-dress known as the *velo*, which is worn for the Mass, and by middle-aged women out of doors, had happily not begun to fall into disuse outside of Madrid and Barcelona, even among the well-to-do, notwithstanding the crusade against the more conspicuous mantilla. And then at the psychological moment came the young English Queen, with all a foreigner's admiration of the beautiful head-dress. The first portrait of her that was sold at a price within the means of the masses showed her beauty enhanced by the typical drapery of exquisite lace, and "She puts it on as if she were a Spaniard," said the people, for the arrangement of the mantilla is subject to strict rules, and no foreigner can hope to penetrate those mysteries unaided. This saved the mantilla. It soon became apparent that Her Majesty intended to wear it on every suitable occasion, and naturally all fashionable female Spain followed suit, to the delight of everybody except the milliners.

In the last Seville Fair there were more mantillas than hats, and if it was a shock to artistic sensibilities to see them in motors, it was at any rate a great deal better than not seeing them at all, as was almost the case six or seven years ago. One year about that time we had a *caseta*, to which came a good number of English and American visitors. All these ladies wore mantillas, and were delighted to have the chance (for the mantilla, it should be said, is only worn *en grande tenue*), and our Spanish friends agreed to stand aloof from the then prevailing fashion and leave their hats at home when they came to dance in the *caseta de los ingleses*. If there was a little self-consciousness among the Englishwomen—one or two of them said the first day that they felt rather like being at a fancy ball—it disappeared when we read the local papers next morning. For there in large type was an article on the decline of the mantilla and a poetical paragraph thanking, in almost pathetic terms, the foreign ladies for wearing "with peculiar grace" the lovely head-dress which Andalucians now seemed to despise.

We never found out who the writer was; he called himself "John-a-dreams" and begged us not to try to pierce his incognito when we wrote to invite him to the *caseta* he had been good enough to praise. But we were pleased to find that our adoption of the mantilla was regarded as a compliment to Spain, and now we and our friends follow the Queen's example and wear it as often as we can. Apart from all other considerations, the festival mantilla and its humbler relative the *velo*, for common wear, are not only universally becoming, but are also very economical, for although a good piece of lace costs as much money as a Paris hat to begin with, it lasts for years and never goes out of fashion.

Our *caseta* that year fulfilled its duty well. We had the light carefully arranged to fall becomingly on the girls' faces, and we had a platform raised extra high for them to dance on. We said that if the object of the *caseta* was to show off the Señoritas we might as well set the stage with special regard to its purpose. And no less than three engagements were the outcome, one of which at least has led to what seems to be a very happy marriage.

As for me, I have come back to the point from which I started. The summer, autumn, and winter are past, and the April Fair has come and gone. My Spanish year is over and the bride's new year has begun, with the scent of roses, jessamine, and orange blossom, the murmur of fountains, and the warble of the nightingales among the elms up the hillside at Granada. For that is where girls who wear mantillas go for their honeymoon, and where good tourists go when they die.

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